

BIGGEST, BRIGHTEST, BEST.

P.W.
PEARSON'S £100 COUPON.
No. 1. January 4, 1896.
P.W.

Dunville's
Whisky
OF ALL DEALERS.
BELFAST.

PEARSON'S

WEEKLY

TO INTEREST,
TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE.

PULC TEAM ON TEA
AWARDED GOLD MEDAL IN AN EXHIBITION 1893
At 1/6 to 3/- per lb of First-Class Groceries Everywhere

No. 285.

TRANSMISSION AT BOOK EXCH.

WEEK ENDING JANUARY 4, 1896.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

Mild in operation and free from injurious drugs.

NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS

100 Years' Reputation
UNEQUALLED REMEDY
INDIGESTION
SICK-HEADACHE
BILIOUSNESS
DEBILITY
STOMACH AND LIVER COMPLAINTS.

SPLENDID TONIC. **GENTLE APERIENT.**

Bottles, 1/1, 2/6, & 11/- each. By all Medical Vendors throughout the World.
Ask for "Norton's Camomile Pills," and do not be persuaded to purchase an imitation.
Prepared by NORTON'S, LIMITED, 21, SPITAL SQUARE, LONDON, E.

EPILEPTIC FITS.

TRENCH'S REMEDY.

IMMEDIATE RELIEF. PERMANENT CURE.

What some Independent Witnesses say:
The MARCHIONESS OF ANGLBY: "The young woman has had a seizure, and she began your medicine, is looking wonderfully bright and rosy, and quite a different girl."
The Hon. Mrs. SOMERSET WARD: "The young girl since finishing your course has had no return whatever of the complaint."
Rev. INGLES G. MONKTON, Canon, Worcester: "Your patient has had no attack since he began your medicine."
Rev. TUDOR ROGERS, Seacombe, Liverpool: "The results have been most satisfactory."
The Rev. E. PEACOCK, Vicar of Nether-Esc, Devon: "I have the greatest confidence in your Remedies, as seeing is believing."
Rev. J. BOUTROS, Winsford, Cheshire: "I have seen wonderful results."
Write for Consultation Form, Testimonials, &c., to the
Manager, Remedy Depot, 33, St. Frederick St., Dublin.

GALLAHER'S TWO-FLAKES TOBACCO.

THE KING OF PIPE TOBACCOS.

Owing to the numerous imitations of this excellent Tobacco, we recommend Smokers to see that they buy it in our 1, 2, and 4oz. decorated Tins, secured by Patent Brand.

SOLD EVERYWHERE.

BEETHAM'S Glycerine & Cucumber

The 'Queen' of Toilet Preparations
FOR ALL SEASONS. IT HAS NO EQUAL
FOR KEEPING THE SKIN SOFT
SMOOTH AND WHITE
during the Coldest weather. Removes and Prevents all REDNESS, ROUGHNESS, CHAPS, IRRITATION, &c., ensuring A CLEAR & HEALTHY COMPLEXION.
Refuse all imitations. Be sure to ask for "BEETHAM'S."
The ONLY GENUINE. Bottles 1s. and 2s. 6d. of all Chemists and Perfumers. Larger size 1/2 and 1/- each. Price direct from the makers, M. BEETHAM & SON, Chemists, Cheltenham.

Cadbury's

cocoa

ABSOLUTELY PURE, THEREFORE BEST.

"Light, refreshing, and invigorating to the jaded mind and body; delicious to the palate: absolutely pure, and free from alkalies."
FAMILY DOCTOR.

HOMOCEA CURES PAIN

Why? It Touches the Spot.

Use for Lumbago, Burns, &c.

Mother's Remedy.

The Homocoea Co., Ltd., 23 Hamilton Square, BIRKENHEAD.

Grandmother: "I cannot say so much in praise of Homocoea. We have used it constantly for one year now, and I am just as warm in its favor. For Lumbago, Burns, Bruises, Cuts, Colds in the Head, Toothache, Headache, Sore Throat, Irritation, its effect is simply marvelous. I recommend it to every one. When anything happens in the family the cry is for Homocoea. My husband says I had better try it for the hair. We use it so much that I have the large size. The children are using it for chubblains. I shall always speak highly of it." Yours faithfully, O. H.

Sold by all chemists, 1/4 and 2/- per box, or free by post for 1/- and 2/- from The HOMOCEA Company, Ltd., Birkenhead.

WITH VENUS SOAP FOR YOUR HELPMATE YOU WILL SAVE RUBBING. HAVE CLOTHES WHITER, AND HOME BRIGHTER.

NOT A RUB IN THE TUB.

VENUS SOAP DOES THE WORK-NOT YOU

A SPLENDID SOAP FOR THE BATH AND TOILET.

VENUS SOAP
Saves Hand Labour. Cleans Paint, Scrubs Floors, does any Household Washing quickly and effectually. MAKES LINENS SPOTLESSLY WHITE.

SOLD BY ALL GROCERS AND CO-OPERATIVE STORES.

All Communications respecting Advertisements should be sent to the Advertisement Department "PEARSON'S WEEKLY" Offices, HENRIETTA STREET 10.

SOMETHING QUITE NEW!

THE WALLIS TABLE ORGAN THE TUBEPHONE.

(Patent applied for.)



Is thoroughly reliable, being strongly made. It has 3 beautiful acting stops, viz., Flute, Violoncello, and Tremolo; also a forte stop. It has a beautiful, polished ebony case, relieved by plated fittings, weighs 16 lbs., capable of being played by 1 or 3 hands, blown at will by either hand or foot.

Compass 3 Octaves and 2 Notes, F to G.
PRICE 24.

The Tubeophone is a clever invention, enabling performers to produce most thrilling effects. When used as a Solo Instrument, the rich, pure, Bell-like tones entrance all who hear them. Anyone without knowledge of Music can play it. For those who desire to play from Music, the "Chromatic" is made. It is strongly and elegantly made, and no mechanism to get out of repair.

TWO OCTAVES - 12/6
DITTO CHROMATIC - 24/-

Free Delivered to any part of the United Kingdom, or through all respectable Music Dealers.

JOSEPH WALLIS & SON, Ltd., 133 & 135, Euston Rd., N.W.
(Telegrams—"PIDDLESTICK, LONDON.")

ARE YOU LITTLE,

If so, wear the "A.D. Invisible Elevator (B.C.). Will increase your height up to four inches; the only approved means, detection impossible; simple, inexpensive. Send stamp for particulars to the ORIENTAL TOILET CO. (B & Dept.), 27, Strand, London.

£20

TO TOBACCONISTS (COMMENCING). See Ill. Guide and Catalogue (230 pages), 2d. "How to Open a Clear Store, £20 to £2,000." TOBACCONISTS' TRADING CO., Ltd., 180, Euston Rd., London. N.B.—Shoppers for all trades. (50 years' reputation.) Mgr., H. Myers.

CURES INDIGESTION

H O V I S

RECE HAS NO RIVAL

B R E A D

ASK YOUR BAKER.

ORGAN

Grand tone, in walnut case, with knee swell; 10 years' warranty; 4/6 per month. Piano and Organ Catalogue free.

BOYD (Limited), 19, Holborn, E.C.

ARE YOU FOND OF NOVELTIES?

If you are, send us a card, and we will send our exhaustive Catalogue Free.

VARIETY CO., DALSTON, LONDON.

1 RISING SUN STOVE POLISH
EASIEST, QUICKEST, CHEAPEST, BEST BLACKLEAD IN THE WORLD.

2 RISIN' SUN METAL POLISH
Gives to all kinds of Metal articles a most beautiful, soft and brilliant polish.

3 MACK'S DOUBLE STARCH
CONTAINS IN PROPER PROPORTIONS CLEANS, BORAX, LUM WAX, &c.

THREE GREAT BOONS
Sample of any one post free 3 stamps
C. CHAN-CELLOR & CO., LONDON

THE "INDISPENSABLE" STYLOGRAPHIC PEN.

3/6

LENGTH 6 INCHES.



The best ink-containing pen yet made. Always ready to write. Holds ink for 10,000 words. Can be carried in any position, being absolutely secure against leakage.

No. 1. Plain Barrel, each 4s. 6d.
No. 2. Mounted Barrel, each 4s. 6d.
Year money refunded willingly if not satisfied. Good Discount to the Trade.

Obtain of your stationer, or send Postal Order direct to
S. SAWYER, 285, COMMERCIAL ROAD, PECKHAM, LONDON, S.E.

PIANO LEARNT IN A WEEK.



Ritchie's Musical Indicator enables anyone entirely ignorant of Music to play the Piano, Organ, or Harp monotonously by ear, and to learn to sing in all keys in one week. 50,000 sold, and every customer delighted. Post free, 1s. 6d.

W. RITCHIE (B. Dept.), 6, Wood Street, Liverpool.

KAPUTINE CURES HEADACHE INSTANTLY.

Samples free from KAPUTINE, LTD., Widdersfield, on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.

HUTTON'S IRISH TWEED

Guaranteed ALL PURE WOOL, unsurpassed for DURABILITY and HARD WEAR.

We guarantee all our Tweeds and Serges are made from pure wool without any admixture of shoddy, and are perfectly fast dye. They are exceptionally well adapted for school and business suits.

BUSINESS SUITS TO MEASURE... 32/6
TROUSERS TO MEASURE... 8/9

PERFECT FIT GUARANTEED OR MONEY RETURNED IN FULL.
Samples, measurement forms, and price lists free. Over 100 new patterns now ready. Thousands of unsolicited testimonials received.

IRISH LIVEN COLLARS... 4/11 per doz.
GENTS' CAMBRIC HANDKERCHIEFS, all pure fax 3/6

PARCELS OVER 20s. CARRIAGE PAID.

G. R. HUTTON & CO., LARNE, IRELAND.

H. SAMUELS



STARTLING AND INCREDIBLE!

A Splendid Watch in cases of a specially prepared metal, exactly resembling REAL SILVER. Accurate time-keeper. Gentleman's size or Lady's (frequently, richly engraved). Forwarded with key and instructions post free, for 10/6. If dissatisfied, full amount returned. A Handsome Albert Chain included free.

Gigantic Success! H. SAMUEL'S RENOWNED "ACME" WATCH, Jewelled, with H. SAMUEL'S PATENT Improved Balance; protective dust-tight cap; Solid STERLING SILVER Cases (stamped). Lady's size, handsomely engraved. Five years' warranty. Worth 3 guineas. H. SAMUEL'S PRICE 25/- Forwarded, with key and full printed instructions complete, safe, and post free. A month's free trial allowed. A SPECTACULAR FREE GIFT with each Watch, as described on a separate sheet, enclosed with H. SAMUEL'S beautifully illustrated Royal Quarto Catalogue of MARVELLOUS REDUCTIONS. Nearly 1500 artistic illustrations. Real Gold Brooches, 3/6; Real Gold Scarf Pins, 1/6; Watches, 7/-; Alberts, 1/- THOUSANDS of bargains. WRITE for this wonderful book, SENT FREE to any address. Every reader enabled to purchase DIRECT FROM THE MANUFACTURER at first cost. Beware of worthless imitations, and post orders direct to H. SAMUEL, enclosing this announcement from PEARSON'S WEEKLY.

H. SAMUEL, Largest English Watch Manufacturer,
97, 99, 101, 33, 89, & 121, MARKET ST., MANCHESTER.

Don't Cough - use

They at once check the Cough and remove the cause.

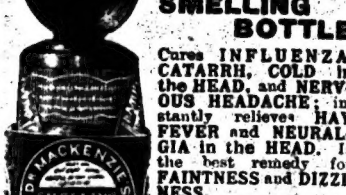
The Unrivalled
One Lozenge alone relieves.
Sold everywhere, Tins 13d. each.

Keatings Lozenges

RED NOSES

All who suffer from this disagreeing complaint caused by INDIGESTION, &c., should write for DR. HENRI'S RENOWNED REMEDY, 22, Glasshouse St., London, W., who guarantees a cure in a few days. 2/6 a box.

HAVE YOU A COLD?
DR. HENRI'S SMELLING BOTTLE



Cures INFLUENZA, CATARRH, COLD in the HEAD, and NERVOUS HEADACHE; instantly relieves HAY FEVER and NEURALGIA in the HEAD. Is the best remedy for FAINTNESS and DIZZINESS.

Sold by all Chemists & Stores. Price One Shilling. Post Free 15 stamps, from Mackenzie's Cure Depot Reading.

*Bits of Tobacco in the mouth
Paper sticking to lips!
Ends wasted!*

ALL CAN BE AVOIDED

by following the advice of the late **SIR MORRELL MACKENZIE**, who advised that all cigarettes should be smoked through mouthpieces.

BE WISE IN TIME AND ASK FOR

OCDEN'S "GUINEA-GOLD" BRAND

EVERY PACKET OF WHICH DOES CONTAIN MOUTHPIECES.

Unequalled for MAKING
SOUPS, STEWS,
GRAVIES, HASHES, &c.

Sold in 1d. Packets.
A 1d. Packet makes
1-Pint Excellent Soup
By simply Boiling in Water.
Sold also in tins at 4jd., 8d., and 1/3.

TWO PRIZE MEDALS, CHICAGO, 1893.

COOKERY BOOK post free from Sole
Manufacturers—
F. KING & CO., Limited,
3 to 6, Camomile Street, London, E.C.

ROBINSON & CLEAVER, BELFAST.

And at 170, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.

CAMBRIC

Direct from the Manufacturers

POCKET HANDKERCHIEFS

V.B.—All Letter O and enquiries for Samples should be sent direct to Belfast as above.

LINEN

Collars, Ladies' 3-fold, 3/6 per doz.
Gents' 4-fold, 4/11 per doz.
Cuffs for Ladies or Gentlemen from 5/11 per doz.

CUFFS, AND SHIRTS.

Shirts, Best quality Long Cloth, with 4-fold Linen Fronts, 3/6 per 4 doz. (to measure 2-1/2 extra).
"Exquisite quality, most moderate in price."—*Illustrated Journal*

FRANCIS' PAANEESER "MARK" POROUS PLASTER

FOR PAINS IN THE CHEST! FOR PAINS IN THE BACK!
FOR PAINS ANYWHERE, AND PAIN EVERYWHERE!!!
Price 18d. of all Chemists, or 1/5 Stamps from THE SOLE MAKERS, FRANCIS & CO., LEICESTER

GIVEN AWAY.

Four Name, your Monogram, bottle of Endorsing Ink 2 Pads, Box and Ruler, for 9d. post free; with Mackin Ink, 1s. 6d. Nickel Silver Pen and Pencil Case with Name Stamp, 1d. Nickel Silver Name and Address Stamp, 1d. Watch Case, Beautifully Chased, with Name and Address Stamp, 1s. 6d. every other description of Rubber Stamps

Endorsing and Indelible Inks, Stencils, Hand-printing Appliances, &c. at half the usual price. Send for List Agents wanted. CAUTION—The Original and Genuine Label has the Trade Mark—"Crystal Palace"—ON EVERY WRITING ADDRESS OR STAMPAL ON JOHN BOND'S GOLD MEDAL PALE INK WORKS, 75, SOUTHGATE RD., LONDON, E.C.

TO THE DEAF.

A Gentleman who cured himself of Deafness and Noises in the Head after fourteen years' suffering will gladly send full particulars of the remedy post free. Address, H. CLIFTON, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, W.C.

INVENTORS

An invention protected for 21. Hand-book "How to Patent an Invention," giving full particulars, forms, &c., free from HUGHES & YOUNG, "Patent Editors" to the principal newspapers, 23, Coleman Street, London, E.C. Established 1829. Inventors assisted in working or selling inventions.

SPECIAL OFFER. 1000 SAMPLE PAIRS, MORRIS' HORSE SKIN BOOTS.

Offered at 10/6 waterproof, worth 12/6. Post 6d. extra. They give comfort to tender feet, stylish appearance, and possess greater durability than the old style boot. Delightfully soft, will not crack, and take a brilliant polish.

Perfect Fit by Post: Our System. Send shape of foot on paper, or old boot for size, with remittance. An illustrated price list and testimonials from Sir George Newnes, Mr. F. A. Atkins, editor of the *Young Men*, and others, will be sent post free, to Ladies and Gentlemen desirous of testing these comfortable boots. Prices are 14s. 6d., 17s. 6d., Hand-sewn, 21s. and 24s.

Write today to G. MORRIS, 55 and 56, Bishopsgate Street Within, LONDON; also 5 and 6, Holborn Viaduct, 25 and 26, St. Swithin's Lane, and 21, King William Street, E.C.

FITS! FITS!! FITS!!!

ALL PERSONS SUFFERING FROM EPILEPSY SHOULD SEND NAME AND ADDRESS TO **JAMES OSBORNE**, Medical Pharmacy, Ashbourne, DERBYSHIRE. Who will forward, free of charge, full particulars, and particulars of the most successful remedy ever discovered for this distressing malady. Sent to all parts of the world.

A MARVELLOUS STORY OF MODERN WARFARE HAS JUST COMMENCED. (SEE PAGE 425.)

PEARSON'S

TO INTEREST
TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE. WEEKLY.

No. 285.]

TRANSMISSION AT
BOOK RATES.

WEEK ENDING JANUARY 4, 1896.

ENTERED AT
STATIONERS' HALL.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

BOUNDARY LINES.

Who can tell when sleep and waking meet to mingle,
Meet to mingle so that sleep's deft opiate wins?
Who can tell when waking pushes past the portals,
Past the portals whence its potency begins?
Just the moment for the breaking
Of the spell between our waking
And our sleep, who can tell?
Just the moment for the breaking of the firm yet
fragile spell,
Who can tell?

Who can tell when girl and woman meet to mingle,
Meet to mingle so that woman wins the day?
Who can tell when a man wanders past the portals,
Past the portals when out sweeps her witching sway?
Just the moment for assuming
That the flower at last is blooming
From its bud, who can tell?
Just the moment that bids girlhood from its bondage
first rebel,
Who can tell?

Who can tell when love and languor meet to mingle,
Meet to mingle so that love may win the soul?
Who can tell when love goes proudly past the portals,
Past the portals whence its radiant realms out-roll?
Just the moment of surrender
To that new large life of splendour
And surprise, who can tell?
Just the moment that would make of earth a heaven if
it were hell,
Who can tell?

ON THE CHEAP.

RAILWAY ticket collectors have an inexhaustible stock of stories to relate of the ingenuity of persons wishing to travel "on the cheap." The following occurred at an examining station on the Great Western Railway:

A ticket examiner entered a compartment wherein a respectably dressed lady was comfortably seated. He did not notice a long, flat package lying on the opposite seat covered with a travelling rug, and with a daily paper thrown carelessly over it, and he would probably have left the compartment oblivious of its existence had not a pair of sweetly pretty eyes peeped over the top, and, in a cautious tone, the owner of them inquired:

"Mamma, has the man gone yet?"
The artful mother confusedly explained that her child was only three, and entitled to travel free; but curiosity impelled him to further investigation, and a robust girl, of apparently ten, revealed herself.

THEIR PET MEANNESS.

THERE is a Frenchman whose eccentricity is often commented upon in Paris. He cannot bear to use towels freely, although he rolls in money. Once when staying in Brittany a week he took his hostess aside before his departure, and showed her about three dozen towels over which he had been gloating for days. "All these, madam, I have saved," he said. "Your servants put them in the room, but I and my wife have used but one between us."

With "Mme. Chère Mère" in one of Frederika Bremer's charming stories, her pet meanness was lace. She could give her children houses and lands, and to yield them fields and farms did not cause her a pang; but when it became a question of duchess "point" she confessed that nothing could be more painful than to part with the least bit of it.

One of the richest women in this country hoards matches as if they were so many wands studded with diamonds. She will give one or two, under protest, to a relative in need of them, but she buys them by the gross and lights and re-lights them until the last charred bit falls off, leaving her often with burnt fingers and a regretful wish that "she could have used that once more." When her children come of age she gives each of them £40,000 with the greatest possible cheerfulness, but if they were to ask her for a whole box of matches she would feel that she was being impoverished, and if they took six that she was being robbed.

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WHAT IS AN EDITION?

"WHAT constitutes an edition?" is a question that is frequently asked, and nobody seems qualified to answer it satisfactorily. The truth is that in ninety-nine out of 100 cases later editions are merely servile reprints of the first edition, and there may have been 10,000 copies of a book made for the first edition, or there may have been only 150.

The first editions of all works by Emile Zola number 20,000 copies each. In a Paris shop, where only rare volumes are sold, a first edition of "L'Assommoir" is valued at 105 francs—say £4—but this book came out at a time when Zola was comparatively unknown, and Zola editions were then limited to 1,000 copies each.

In fact, in France an edition is supposed to consist of 1,000 copies, but, as Mr. Robert H. Sherard says in a recent letter: "Publishers are not without guile, and to whip up a sale a book may be issued in editions of fifty copies, so that by the time 1,000 copies have been disposed of the book is in its twentieth edition."

THE SMALLEST MAN IN ENGLAND.

A WELL-KNOWN American artist tells a very good story of his first visit to London. Some years ago there used to be a perfect giant of a policeman on duty in front of the Royal Exchange.

The American, who was not over-burdened with inches, either in longitude or latitude, asked this man to direct him to some place close at hand, received a courteous reply, and went on his way rejoicing. Shortly afterwards he again applied to the constable to be directed somewhere else, with the same result.

"You seem to be a stranger to London, sir," said the bobby.

"Yes," replied the artist, swelling up, turkey-cock fashion, like Americans generally do when they mention their nationality, and assuming that patronising way the Yankee is so fond of in England, "I'm an American."

"Indeed, sir," was the reply, "then all I can say, sir, is that you speak remarkably good English for a foreigner."

The gentleman from the United States used to say that, as he looked at the form towering head and shoulders above himself, he felt as if he was the smallest man in England that day.

HOW OSTRICHES ARE PLUCKED.

IN South Africa it was originally the custom of the keeper to coax the ostrich to come towards him by throwing to it some corn, and then when the bird had its head down the keeper would catch it by the neck. At the same moment several men would take hold firmly of its legs and compel it to squat down. Then its tail and wing feathers would be plucked.

Another practice was to give the ostrich some dainties, and while it was engaged in eating them the keeper with a sharp knife would cut the feathers close to the skin. Subsequently in Algiers a box was devised with movable sides into which the ostrich was driven and the feathers then extracted.

The directions given were that the feathers must be caught as near the skin as possible, and pressed gently as if to stick them farther into the flesh, then twisted half way round. This movement dislodges the feather from its socket easily and without wounding the ostrich. A certain degree of dexterity is required for this operation, which can, however, be rapidly performed after a little practice.

A still later improvement is the plucking box now used in Cape Colony. It is a very solid wooden box, in which there is just room for one ostrich to stand; he cannot possibly turn round, nor can he kick, as the sides of the box are too high.

At each end, generally, there is a stout door, the one opening inside and the other outside the inclosure. The birds are dragged up in succession to the first door, and, after more or less of a scuffle, pushed in and the door shut. There the two operators, standing one on each side of the box, have the ostrich completely in their power, and with a few rapid snips of the shears remove the long white plumes from his wings.

An Easy Way to Earn

One Hundred Pounds.



At the right hand top corner of the front page of *P.W.* will be found a coupon. This coupon will appear every week during the whole of 1896. It will also appear every week in

Short Stories and *The Story Teller* during the same period.

What to Do.

Procure as many of these coupons as you possibly can. Once you get them keep them. A good way would be to paste them on to slips of paper. A better way would be to paste them neatly into a book. However, the main thing is to get and to keep them.

Why You Should Do It.

Because we are going to give the person who collects the most coupons during the year 1896 the sum of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS, and if you do not want this money for yourself you can nominate someone to whom it would be useful. Perhaps you have a poor relation; perhaps you know some deserving charity; perhaps you know some poor crippled child or bedridden old man or woman, to whom the money would be a Godsend.

It need not cost you anything beyond a little trouble to earn this money for them. All you need do is to induce the people who read *Pearson's Weekly*, *Short Stories*, and *The Story Teller*, to give you the coupons from their papers. If amongst your friends there are not many who read these three papers, then worry them until they do read them. Explain the reason, and don't be put off with promises that may never be fulfilled. Buy the papers for them; collect the money, and the coupons at the same time.

If you go the right way to work about it, it will not be difficult to induce people to read such interesting papers as *Pearson's Weekly*, *Short Stories*, and *The Story Teller* undoubtedly are.

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS is a big sum to earn for, say, an hour's work a week, fifty-two hours in the year, six working days at eight and a half hours a day.

£100 for a Week's Work!

No coupons are to be sent to us until January 1st, 1897. Keep them safely till then.

All coupons are of equal value:

R

With Best Wishes to the Readers of *P.W.* for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Six First-Class Passengers.

BY WINIFRED GRAHAM.

VI.—OF WOMEN AND LOVE.

"I suppose you are expecting my story to-night?" said Carter, as the six friends settled themselves comfortably in the carriage. "Well, I won't disappoint you; so here goes!"

"She was altogether charming. 'Mrs. Lyndsey? Oh, yes,' people would say when you mentioned her name; 'everyone knows her, and she is a very old friend of mine.'"

"Each fresh acquaintance became a 'very old friend' in the course of a few weeks. They would quite forget the fact of their recent introduction to the fair widow."

"Though the bloom of youth had passed, there was still the attraction left of an elegant figure, handsome features, and burnished gold hair, bronzed by the sun of eight-and-thirty summers, which had glided lightly over Mrs. Lyndsey's head."

"She was one of those energetic and lively individuals who never rest. Wherever she went the widow entertained. She loved to gather her fellow-creatures round her, to be the centre of an admiring circle, to display her gifts as hostess. She knew exactly what everybody liked—who should meet who, and how to amuse them. It was always 'Liberty Hall' at Mrs. Lyndsey's. So many people invite their friends only to make them feel as if at school again, their pleasures being mapped out, while they are dictated to, and made to drive, ride, play golf, eat, drink, and smoke at stated hours. Dinner was the only immovable feast in the widow's establishment. You could breakfast, lunch, or tea when and where you pleased."

"Music was Mrs. Lyndsey's ruling passion. She took immense interest in it, from the fact that her family had all been great singers, while she could not produce a note in tune. She felt it her duty to compensate for this deficiency by becoming the patron of talented Nobodies, and bringing them to the front by her influence and power."

"Her latest discovery was a baritone, Bertrand Annesley, whose beautiful voice had first been heard at a large evening reception at her town house. It was given for his benefit, Mrs. Lyndsey having made up her mind to bring him to the fore. Society declared him a success, and since then he had become the fashion."

"He was a slim man with dark hair, deep-set blue eyes, clear-cut features, and straight, white teeth, which were displayed to advantage. I have heard them called aggressive teeth, since the singer always appeared to be showing them to you. He had a particularly fascinating manner, which alone should have made his way in the world of fashion. He was never humble, never proud, yet he always made you feel as if he were in want of some particular knowledge that you alone could supply."

"He was the only man I, for one, have ever met who could console or congratulate without appearing at a disadvantage."

"I adore 'Buzz,' Mrs. Lyndsey would say jokingly, since that was the nickname she had chosen to give Bertrand Annesley. 'It is so satisfactory to introduce a singer that everybody falls down to worship. I was his fairy god-mother, you know. I call him my son.'"

"This was a cloak with which she sought to conceal the open way in which she flirted with the young singer. It flattered her vanity that she should pose as her property."

"Directly the Goodwood week was over, Mrs. Lyndsey enlivened a country neighbourhood by descending upon it with a troop of London friends, and giving a series of garden parties."

"I cannot think why the very word 'garden' on an invitation card should instil the idea of boredom and insipidity to the average mind," said Mrs. Lyndsey, looking up at Buzz. "I pause before penning the word, biting the tip of her quill doubtfully. 'It means those everlasting greenhouses, which the people will file through from a sense of duty, and pretend to admire the grapes.'"

"Yes; it is rather deadly."

"And the men won't come, Buzz. You cannot possibly talk to more than six girls at a time, while there are sure to be sixty."

"It certainly sounded hopeless; Mr. Annesley looked perplexed."

"But the local people will feel horribly defrauded if I don't give my dull afternoons."

"Why not try the effect of an evening garden-party? These hot summer nights are made for it. Illuminate your grounds, and have singers on the lake. Voices sound chanting across the water. You might get some really professionals down for the occasion. Put them on a ablaze with red torches and coloured lights, and you and all true lovers of music mad with joy."

"What beautiful ideas you have, Buzz! Think how romantic it will be!" cried Mrs. Lyndsey, her eyes sparkling with delight. "Of course you will sing, though you had promised yourself a rest after the season. I could not attempt it without you as the 'star.' We must do the thing thoroughly well; but first of all I shall have to consult dear Mr. Bodkin; he is so dreadfully hurt if I get up anything without telling him."

"Who is Mr. Bodkin?" asked Buzz—the widow thought a trifle quickly."

"Oh! don't you know? He is our fat old Squire; the best-hearted creature in the world. I make him my confidant in everything; he is so easily pleased and interested!"

"Does Mrs. Bodkin share the confidence?"

"How silly you are, Buzz! There is no Mrs. Bodkin. That's one of the dear Squire's most praiseworthy merits."

"He will be an acquisition; then, among the sixty girls, being a bachelor and well off."

"I am afraid I kindle the flame of jealousy in the heart of many a worthy village spinster. They tell me he is very solemn and morose when I occupy the Hall—that he only

takes jocular once a year. As if I only saw him when I am here!"

"Poor Mr. Bodkin, do not break his heart," said Buzz compassionately."

"Mrs. Lyndsey rested her chin between her hands, put her elbows on the table, and, leaning forward, looked straight into Bernard Annesley's eyes."

"Do you think I could?"

"Why not?"

"I am old."

"He laughed."

"Only the young can afford to say that," he replied."

"What night shall we have the party?" she said abruptly, changing the subject."

"Friday week?"

"No, an unlucky day."

"Surely you are not superstitious?"

"Of course not, only dear Mr. Bodkin never fixes anything on Friday. He has some very strange practices and customs. Besides, if we put it off till Monday Alice will be back. She'll enjoy it, you know. You have never seen my little girl, Buzz."

"It is a pleasure to come."

"She has been at school in Germany—such a sweet child!"

"Mr. Annesley expected to see a girl of about twelve. To his surprise a beautiful young woman verging on eighteen arrived one evening, dusty and travel-stained, while they were at dinner."

"All Mrs. Lyndsey's guests were Londoners, and their costumes fairly dazzled Alice as she bounded in unceremoniously."

"Here I am at last," she announced, flinging back a long cloak and unwinding her veil. "How do you do, everybody? How nice and clean you all look!"

"She crumpled her mother's chiffon in a fond embrace, and perched herself on the arm of a chair."

"I've had an awful journey, darling," she said, addressing Mrs. Lyndsey. "Mariana, my maid, groaned all the time on the boat, though it was as calm as a lake. I believe she thought it was the right thing to do. I ran across some Americans I met in Paris fortunately, so they kept me company."

"In Paris, my dear! When were you there?" asked her mother wonderingly."

"Don't you remember, Fraulein Wieder took me at Easter for a week? You paid for it, anyway—the bill was enormous. Fraulein got all her summer things out of it."

"Oh, Alice!" exclaimed Mrs. Lyndsey with mild reproach."

"Thank goodness, I am not going back. You will have to let me out now Mammy, and I shall date you terribly."

"Mrs. Lyndsey frowned slightly under her auburn fringe, though she smiled to her guests, with a pretty little shrug of her bare shoulders, as much as to say, 'I don't care.'"

"I shall want to be properly introduced when I am clothed decently and in my right mind," said Alice, slipping off the chair, and throwing her cloak over her arm. "I am dead beat and ravenous now, but will dine upstairs and tumble into bed, so good-night all. To-morrow you shall make my acquaintance."

"So saying she walked to the door with an easy, gliding step."

"After dinner Mrs. Lyndsey went up and found Alice lounging in a white dressing-gown after a bath, with the remains of a hot chicken by her side."

"They sent me up champagne, darling," she said, "but you know I drink beer."

"Beer!" cried Mrs. Lyndsey. "A girl like you taking beer? It does not sound at all nice, and so very bad for the complexion!"

"That comes of stagnating in Germany," replied Alice with a smile. "But I will try and tone down and do you credit. By the way, while we were waiting in London (three hours, you know) I could not sit in a hotel doing nothing, so I went to Madame Lottingdale and ordered some smart frocks. You are not angry, are you? I bought an exquisite pale pink dress for your evening garden-party. I look lovely in it."

"Mrs. Lyndsey's face fell."

"I say, you don't mind me looking lovely, Mammy, do you?"

"What an absurd idea, Alice, only I was going to wear pale pink, and we shall be laughed at if we dress alike."

"All right. I will wear the blue. I bought it at the same time and it is just as pretty, so don't fret."

"Mrs. Lyndsey returned to the drawing-room with a sigh. She thoroughly realised at last that she was actually the possessor of a grown-up daughter."

"If only she could have stayed at school another year," she thought mournfully. "Fancy me a chaperon!"

"Alice made herself popular at once with her mother's guests—she was so merry and high-spirited. She inherited Mrs. Lyndsey's gift of becoming most intimate immediately with comparative strangers, and making them feel as if they had known her all their life."

"She treated Bertrand Annesley as a sort of elder brother, and very soon adopted the familiar term of 'Buzz,' hitherto reserved for Mrs. Lyndsey only."

"Fate favoured the evening garden-party, a glorious moon beaming on the revellers, and as Alice listened, enthralled, to Bertrand's voice swelling across the water, she thought she had never heard anything so beautiful in her life."

"When he sprang to the shore from the boat Alice's eyes glowed. She laid her cool fingers in his palm, and spoke from her heart:

"That was grand," she said, "grand!" And her praise was so genuine that it pleased him well."

"I wonder what you have in your throat to give you that voice?" she continued after a pause. "It comes out like the breath of your soul. I expect you will sing when you die, or if you groan it will be musical."

"Mrs. Lyndsey moved between them."

"Buzz, Lady Gallone wants to know you. Alice, my

dear, do go and talk to that dreadful Mr. Sowerbutt, or I am sure he will tack on to someone and worry them to death. He is all right if you know his pedigree, who he is, and all about him, but I do hate a man who makes you feel hot when you introduce him."

"Sing again, Buzz," said Alice, as she went away."

"Buzz!" laughed Mrs. Lyndsey, looking after her daughter's retreating figure. "You must excuse her, but she's only a schoolgirl still—a mere child."

"The evening proved an immense success; even Mr. Bodkin said so, and he had prophesied a failure from the first."

"He raised Mrs. Lyndsey's hand to his lips under the shadow of the trees."

"It is all so like you," he said, "utterly beautiful, original, fascinating."

"She laughed, and turned away."

"Why had he stopped at her hand?" Mr. Bodkin asked himself afterwards."

"He who hesitates is lost!" and then there was that singing chap, whom idle gossips termed, 'her latest.'"

"The word struck terror to his heart."

"Whenever he tried to find her for a moment alone, some aggravating individual always intervened."

"The summer days of outdoor pleasures passed swiftly by, and Mrs. Lyndsey gradually began to ask herself why they were the happiest she had ever spent."

"Involuntarily her eyes turned to Bertrand Annesley as if in answer to the thought."

"How handsome he looked, seated at the piano, his hands straying idly over the keys, his voice singing snatches of song."

"Mrs. Lyndsey was reading in a low window seat, but the words, and the sense, became jumbled in her mind. She was sure the heroine had just said something brilliant, for she scanned a page that struck her as clever, though a moment later she had forgotten it."

"Finally the book fell idly in her lap. She was tired of epigrams. They were alone in the cool solitude of her boudoir. She picked a rose growing in the window and began plucking off the leaves and rolling them between her finger and thumb."

"Then, glancing out, she saw her friends in the garden, and drew back behind the curtain; it was pleasanter here with Buzz."

"This is the privilege of great friendship," he said, speaking as he played. "To be together in silence and not feel bound to talk."

"Mrs. Lyndsey ceased rolling the soft velvet leaves, and looked across at Bertrand Annesley. She leant her head against the panel and smiled languidly."

"Of great friendship," she repeated, as if the words were sweet."

"I hope," murmured the man, and he touched the keys so softly that his music sounded faint and far away, "that it may be always so, through all the years that are beyond. I seem to picture them stretching out before us, bright and beautiful, unchanging save for the uniting of a closer bond."

"Mrs. Lyndsey's heart began to flutter; she caught her breath. A faint pink stole into her cheeks. The melody seemed surging in her ears; it breathed of love, of life—life as she had never known it. She remembered her wedding day with the rich man who had been so kind always and considerate."

"He was very nice," Mrs. Lyndsey would say, if questioned about her first husband."

"Now she began to feel the want of a companion—a man who would be her right hand in everything. Buzz was always ready to suggest and advise, she could rely on him to do her every wish, to help entertain, to banish ennui, to soothe a fretful mood."

"I don't know how I shall tear myself away," he said, as if reading her thoughts."

"But you will not leave us yet? I should be quite lost here in the country without you."

"How good of you to say that. I only wish I could believe it."

"Buzz, do you doubt my word? Should I favour you with society lies?"

"Why not? They are very graceful things, made for pretty lips."

"Mrs. Lyndsey tapped her foot on the soft carpet a trifle impatiently."

"It is thanks to you," said Bertrand, "that I am what I am. You 'made' me, Mrs. Lyndsey—there is no other word. I am now, through your kind help, a rich man. You see our ideas of wealth are slightly different, yet I consider myself at least sufficiently well off to think of marriage. Lately I have been deeply, seriously, considering the subject—for love, Mrs. Lyndsey, cannot be lightly put aside."

"His eyes grew bright with passion; he ceased playing."

"You said," he continued, changing his tone to one of intreaty, "that you and your daughter would come and stay with me when your visitors leave. I should be so proud to return, in ever so slight a measure, your hospitality. By conferring this favour on me you will—"

"But Mrs. Lyndsey interrupted him."

"I did not know that you had taken it seriously, Buzz."

"I only spoke in jest. You know I should enjoy to come above all things, and for a moment I was tempted. But—"

"But what?"

"Well, come here, and I will tell you."

"He crossed the room, and seated himself beside her."

"You see, Buzz dear, people talk so dreadfully; the world is not kind to lonely women. If you were a relation it would be different; but, after all, we are nothing to each other."

"Would you let me be something, then?" he asked, his face paling with sudden anxiety—"a relation, for instance? I have longed to tell you the secret of my heart, but at last I believe you guess it—you know and understand. Till now I have not had the courage to speak to you. I never realised before I came here what it was

Have you bought yours yet?

to love, and then I was appalled at the thought of my own unworthiness—till I saw that my passion was returned—I—

"He seized her hand, and as he did so the door opened, and Alice, radiant, breathless, entered the room."

"She had a tennis racket in her hand, which she flung on the sofa."

"I have won the tournament—congratulate me, Buzz!"

"Well done! How clever you are!" Mrs. Lyndsey's cheeks were aflame, her eyes gleamed in an odd excited way, while her fingers nervously tore the roses, and let their crushed leaves fall scattered on the window-seat. Her heart swelled with pride and joy, as she gazed tenderly at Buzz. The sweet truth had been revealed at last—he loved her! he loved her! Oh, why had Alice come so inopportunistically, as the words trembled on his lips. She was always obtruding her personality when least wanted, contrasting her young freshness with matured bloom.

"What are you two doing?" asked Alice, with a look at Bertrand that Mrs. Lyndsey could not understand. Was it possible that the girl was in the habit of vulgarly chaffing him about his devotion to her mother?

"Oh!" as if suddenly remembering something, "I met Mr. Bodkin—he was trying a new horse, such a beauty! I thought it would kick his dog-cart to pieces. He gave me this letter for you, mamma—said it was very important, and you were to read it at once—alone!"

"Mr. Annesley took the hint, for Alice gave him a look that plainly said: 'Go!'"

"As he left the room, Alice went over to the piano, and began to strum."

"Pray have some consideration for my nerves," sighed Mrs. Lyndsey, tearing open the envelope. Her mind was so full of Buzz that she could hardly grasp the sense of Mr. Bodkin's elaborate epistle. She read it with a strange expression in her eyes.

"Poor man!" she thought, a pitying little smile flickering over her proud lips. "Fancy him competing against Buzz! Alice, my child, come here. I want a serious talk with you."

"The girl sprang to her feet with an inquiring look."

"Yes, mamma, what is it?"

"She came to her mother's feet, and drew a low stool forward, resting her arms on Mrs. Lyndsey's knees. There was a glance of suspicion in her eyes as to the nature of this conversation. The widow hesitated, her cheeks as crimson now as the fallen rose she had destroyed. Then she bent down her head and raised Alice's face with one of her heavily-ringed fingers under the girl's chin."

"I am going to ask you a straight question," she said abruptly; "answer me truly."

"A moment's pause."

"Alice, would you like to have a step-father?"

"The girl laughed, as if the words brought no surprise to her wide-awake soul."

"How well she is taking it!" thought Mrs. Lyndsey, hardly able to conceal her delight, as she thought of the young and talented lover she had brought to her feet."

"Darling!" cried Alice with good-humoured approval, "it is just the thing of all others I should most desire. I want to see you happy, as happy as I am. It is quite horrid of me not to have confided in you before; but I've often heard you declare that early marriages are a mistake, and of course I know it would be very dreadful to be a grand-mother, so I was afraid you would say no. But now that the overpowering influence of love has come into your life also, I feel it is time to speak. Here is another straight question: Mamma, would you like a son-in-law?"

"Mrs. Lyndsey's astonished eyes expanded. She still looked on Alice as a mere child. This was a revelation."

"Her mother was speechless from sheer surprise."

"You see," the girl continued, "of course he knows I am rather young and inexperienced, and fears that you will blame him for stealing me so soon. It is rather greedy, isn't it?" with a short little laugh, and a quickening of her pulses. "He has meant to ask your consent every day, but something always happened to prevent him. I really wonder we ever got engaged at all, with so many visitors in the house."

"Naturally I can guess who you are going to marry, and I am sure Mr. Bodkin will make you an excellent husband. I believe an old man's darling has the best of it in the end. Of course, I don't mean because he dies sooner. Oh, mamma, in your new-found happiness, surely you will never refuse me Buzz? He said he would tell you about it, but I don't believe he has."

"Alice looked down with a shy smile, her cheeks were burning, and she did not notice the horror and anguish that dimmed her mother's eyes."

"Mrs. Lyndsey pressed one hand to her throat, and dug the pink nails of the other into her small palm."

"The struggle lasted a moment, then she regained her composure."

"Tell him he may have me," pleaded Alice.

"Mrs. Lyndsey's voice was strained and faint."

"I am too fond of Buzz," she replied slowly, "to deny him anything."

"You dear!" gasped Alice with a sigh of relief. "But, oh, how selfish I am to worry you at such a time with my own affairs! May I see Mr. Bodkin's letter? Or are proposals always strictly private? I should rather like it in black and white. Do let me have one peep; he is to be my father, so it can't matter."

"Mrs. Lyndsey, now calm and collected, rose and went to her desk."

"If you will write now, mamma, Buzz and I will walk to the Manor House and leave your letter at the lodge."

"Mrs. Lyndsey sealed the envelope and handed it to her daughter. She drew a long breath that sounded rather like a sob."

"Take it," she said. "There will be one heart happier for this afternoon's work."

"Then she went back to the window-seat, and watched them down the drive."

THE END.

WOMEN AND TROUSERS.

FOR the privilege of wearing trousers the French Government charges women a tax of from £2 to £2 10s. a year. This by no means gives every woman who is willing to pay the tax a right to wear trousers. The Government instead confers the right as a tribute to great merit.

Trousers are, in fact, a sort of decoration given to women as the ribbon of the Legion of Honour is given to men.

The only women to whom has been granted the right to wear trousers are George Sand, Rosa Bonheur, Mme. Lieulafoy, the Persian archaeologist, Mme. Foucault, the bearded woman, and two feminine stone cutters, Mme. Fourreau and La Jeannette.

A BABOON WITH A BRAIN.

IN the Transvaal some of the fruit gardens are much exposed to the ravages of large cynocephalic apes, and a good guard has to be kept, or the results of long labour would be lost. In some of those gardens grow certain shrubs which are much affected by wasps, the insects liking to attach thereto their nests.

These wasps, though small, have a very venomous sting. Baboons had often been noticed eyeing with envious glances the fast-ripening fruit in one certain garden, but feared to gather for fear of attracting the assaults of the wasps.

One morning the farmer heard terrible cries, and with the aid of a good field glass he witnessed the following tragedy: A large, venerable baboon, chief of the band, was catching the younger apes and pitching them into the shrubs whereon hung the wasps' nests. This he repeated again and again, in spite of the most piteous cries from his victims.

Of course, the wasps assumed the defensive in swarms. During this part of the performance the old brute quietly fed on the fruit, deigning occasionally to throw fragmentary remains to some female and young baboons a little further off.

WITCHES IN SCOTLAND.

SO late as the middle of this century a girl of Louisburgh, near Wick, was accused of being in league with the "poopers o' mischief," and a remedy akin to that recently practised with such tragic results in Ireland was devised. She was placed in a basket lined with shavings of wood, which was then suspended over a fire. The issue in this case was not fatal, but the folk averred that she was "not half so witch-like" after she had been singed.

A hag of the Northern Isles was at times thought to be metamorphosed into a porpoise, and in fair weather she would dive under and overturn a fishing-boat, against whose skipper she bore a grudge. On one occasion she was made to place her hand on the bodies of several men who had met their death in such a way, and "one bled at the collar bone," another "in the hands and fingers, gushing out bluid thairat, to the great admiration of the beholders and the revelation of the judgment of the Almychtie."

A host of stories tell of northern witches who have given diseases to horses, oxen, and flocks of moorland sheep. Herdsmen to this day distrust unknown persons who touch the food of their kye, lest it be poisoned. In Shetland the cat or *vaneja* is regarded as an animal which brings good luck; if she is seen to run towards the boat's *mast* there is sure to be a good catch.

In Caithness, on the contrary, witches frequently appear in the form of cats. A carpenter of Scrabster in olden times was systematically robbed of his meal and cakes. He thought it "cu'na be cannie," and one night as he watched he saw a number of cats devouring his property. In a trice he cut off the right leg of one of them, whereupon they made their escape with a rapidity which confirmed his former suspicions. Shortly afterwards an old woman, who had always been looked upon with disfavour, was found dead in her lone cottage bereft of her right leg.

HIS PARTING SHOT.—He: "But couldn't you learn to love me, Ida?"

She: "I don't think I could, George."

He (reaching for his hat): "It is as I feared. You are too old to learn."

MOTHER: "When do you suppose that young man who calls upon you will make known his intentions, Laura?"

Laura: "I think he will propose pretty soon. Last evening he was very anxious to know whether I could dress on twenty pounds a year."

FRISKY SPINSTER: "How many dances are you going to give me to-night, Captain Waxham?"

Captain Waxham: "Oh, I'm so sorry, but there's not enough men, you know, and I've just been told by Mrs. Masham to dance with the girls who—a—who are not likely to get partners."

(Asks the girl just behind him for three waltzes and a polka.)

THE ROMAN BEFANA.

TWELFTH NIGHT IN THE ETERNAL CITY

CHRISTMAS in Rome is a gay and happy time, but the compliments of the season fail to include presents for anybody, either great or small. Instead of Santa Claus it is the *Befana* who is responsible for the surprises that drop once a year into Roman households.

For the Italian name for Twelfth Night, or Epiphany, is Epifania, which uneducated persons long ago corrupted into Befana, and the convenience of the shorter word soon brought it into general use.

Many centuries ago a curious Epiphany custom arose in Italy. The simple-hearted peasant folk were addicted to all sorts of harmless frolics, and they thought it fine fun to get up a fantastic lay figure, which they placed in their windows on Epiphany eve.

It represented a hideous old woman in a huge, frilled cap, who was trying to keep the big spectacles on her nose from slipping down to her pointed chin. She carried a dilapidated broom in her hand, and was altogether quite a scarecrow, since there was much friendly rivalry as to which family could succeed in making the most ridiculous figure of the Befana.

There is a story that the Befana was an old lady who was busily employed sweeping her house when the three wise men of the East went by on their way to Bethlehem. On being called to see them pass she answered she was busy, and would wait till they came back. Since then she has been in a perpetual state of looking for their coming.

The essential points of the fable may have crept into Italian folk-lore from some other country, but at any rate Roman mothers after a time began to tell their children that the Befana would come down the chimney with gifts for them on Twelfth Night. Little by little stockings were left in waiting about the huge fireplace, which in old Italian kitchens was wide enough to allow several Befanas to enter abreast, and hence seemed a far more feasible thoroughfare than the narrow flue of our own times.

According to an old legend, it was the privilege of the Befana to stick pins into naughty children, and as a diet of beans was supposed to cause insensibility to pain, it is still a Roman custom to eat beans on Epiphany Eve.

Roman children no longer help to make caricatures of the Befana, for that fashion has passed away, but they still depend on her as their best friend. No Santa Claus was ever more lavish with his favours.

Why horns should be an important item in Epiphany merrymaking I cannot say, but, nevertheless, Twelfth Night in Rome is made hideous with noises that are most trying to any but Roman nerves. Armed with long tin trumpets, children and young folks sally forth to a certain square which is turned into a toy bazaar for the time being. The very small children soon buy their toys and hurry home to hang up stockings in the hope of more such treasures, but the gay, older crowd maintain the uproar until long after midnight.

The throng is so dense that one must laboriously push and elbow his way along, but here, as everywhere, "the more the merrier" seems a popular theory. There are hundreds of horns of all sizes and tones, and the concentration of terrific blasts is deafening, but everybody is in fine spirits.

Anger is a futile resource, for, rightly esteeming an angry person to be an interloper, the merry-makers turn upon him their joint forces, and with one accord try to blow his fumes away.

The code of action is summed up in the simple maxim: "If anyone blow in your ear, wheel promptly about and blow into his with all your might and main." The bigger the trumpet the greater the fun, so Romans think, and their blowing powers are little short of superhuman, for even in the "wee sma' hours" one may hear youths going home after a night of trumpeting, yet still giving such blasts as are never heard outside of Rome.

Another interesting Roman custom is peculiar to the season. During Epiphany week there is a kind of pictorial representation of "Christ in the manger" in the Ara Celi church. In front of this *presepio*, as it is called, children come to declaim and to recite poetry, and all about the large church one finds groups of admiring friends gathered round some small child as a centre of attraction.

Italians have great natural talent for speaking and acting; so very wee mites give long dialogues and difficult recitations in a manner as truly astonishing as it is entertaining.

The child who recites is usually poor enough to be very glad if a casual listener give him a few coppers as a reward of merit.

As the children leave the church they move slowly down the long stairway, and hover longingly about the toys, while those who have recited to the entire satisfaction of their friends are sure to be treated to something from this peculiar open-air bazaar.

Few children fail to receive some present. A common street sight is a group of ill-clad waifs, who, in the enjoyment of Befana gifts, are forgetting their hunger, dirt, and rags. And as even the dullest eye grows bright, and the coldest heart grows warm over happy little ones, Twelfth Day is a glad time for everybody, and well deserves the red cross mark by which it is distinguished in a Roman calendar.

Have you bought yours yet?

QUESTIONS WORTH ANSWERING.

REPLIES.

2799. Which is the most Recently Discovered Pre-historic People?

At the last meeting of the British Association there was read a paper describing the discovery by Professor Flinders Petrie of a city and cemetery in the district between Pallas and Negadeh, about thirty miles north of the ruins of Thebes, in which excavations disclosed the existence of a people of whom history has no word to say. Although in the midst of what has so long been known as Egypt, the ruins and graves contained no trace of implements or ornaments that could be classed as Egyptian, and, more than this, the skulls disclosed a physiognomy absolutely distinct from that of the Egyptians. Further, none of the bodies had been embalmed or buried at full length, and distinct evidences of ceremonial cannibalism were found. Moreover, they were a tall race, with powerful nether limbs showing a mountain origin. The features were prominent, nose aquiline, and hair brown and wavy. They had made considerable advance in the arts, and possessed finely-worked pottery, carved wood, and flint and copper weapons and tools. They are believed to have been the people who invaded and conquered Egypt about 3000 B.C., and caused the gap or "dark age" in Egyptian history which intervenes between the Seventh and the Ninth Dynasties.

2800. Which Flower has the most Colours in a Single Blossom?

Of flowers proper the palm must be awarded to the more highly cultivated varieties of pansies, some of which in a single bloom show nearly all the gradations of colour from white through yellow, brown, blue, and red, to violet and purple. The singular floral freaks known as orchids have frequently many colours in one blossom, but, so far as the writer knows, no specimen has yet been produced which excels in this respect the humbler and more beautiful pansy.

2801. What is the Largest Extent of the Earth's Surface that can be Seen from one Spot?

This depends on two circumstances. First, the elevation above the sea level, and secondly, the absence of intervening obstacles such as may obstruct the line of sight. The point that best satisfies these conditions is the Nevada of Cayambe, a peak on the line of the equator in the north of the Andes, rising 19,535 feet above the sea. This has been described by travellers as the most notable landmark in the world. It commands from its position the whole valley of the Amazon, and the view in this direction, over low lying country, is absolutely unlimited except by the horizon. It has an equal range towards the north-west, and its line of view stretches right across the Gulf of Panama. Though the country towards the south is mountainous, it encounters no higher peak. It is only towards the south-west that its view crosses Chimborazo, which is higher, but is surrounded on all sides by high peaks, and consequently does not embrace so wide an extent of country.

2802. When was the most Stubborn Resistance Made by the People of this Country to a New Law?

Between the years 1349 and 1381, which was the period of the popular struggle which ended in the emancipation of the labouring classes from the old condition of serfdom. War and pestilence had greatly reduced the numbers of men available for labour; hence labour rose in price. To artificially counteract this natural operation the Statute of Labourers was passed. It was practically ignored till it was re-inacted in 1351. Still, in spite of the severest penalties, the working classes refused to submit to limitation of pay and restriction of locality, and at last, in 1381, it broke out into the great revolt which practically ended villeinage in England for ever.

2802. Which Single Alteration in our Coinage would most nearly Transform it into a Decimal System?

A slight change in the value of the penny would render our present coinage almost available as a decimal system; instead of the penny being, as at present, the twenty-fourth part of a florin, let it be the twenty-fifth part. What prevents us from advantageously using decimals in money calculations in the existing system is the fact that one of our units, the penny, is the twelfth part of the next unit, the shilling, and that 100 is not divisible by 12. We get rid of this difficulty by making the penny the twenty-fifth part of a florin, and our system becomes as follows: The standard unit is the florin, 1'00; going up, the half-sovereign is five florins, or 5'00; the sovereign, ten florins, or 10'00; the five-pound note, 50'00; and the ten-pound note, 100'00; going down, the shilling is half a florin, or '50; the sixpence, '25; the penny, '04; and the farthing, '01.

2803. Which is the most Permanent Colour?

Such a question can only be answered by experience, for time is the only test of permanency of colour. Egyptian travellers not merely refer to the marvellous frescoes which form the principal hall decorations of the ancient tombs and temples, but they remark on the marvellous freshness of the paintings, although they are thousands of years old. So far back as B.C. 4000, long before the Pyramids were built, the tomb of Nefermat, the inventor of this wonderful art of wall decoration, was covered with characters and figures executed with coloured pastes, the colours used being hematite, ochre, malachite, carbon, and sulphate of lime—all wonderfully fresh even now. These colours vie with each other in point of permanency. But as this gives us little help in solving the question, we may fall back on the doctrine propounded by Dr. Thomas Young, that there are three elements of colour sensation—or rather, three primary colours—red, blue, and yellow, out of which all the known tints can be prepared. Given the best materials and absence of destructive atmospheric influences—the conditions found in the Egyptian tomb paintings—these colours may be viewed as equally permanent.

2804. Which may be Described as the Healthiest of the Fine Arts?

Painting is in all probability the healthiest of the fine arts. The successful artist gets plenty of outdoor life when he is engaged in painting landscapes and seascapes, and fresh air, as everyone knows, is a *sine qua non* of healthy existence. As a rule, he also travels a great deal in foreign countries, and few things are better calculated to improve a man's health than constant changes of scenery, combined with interesting glimpses of the habits and life of nations to which he has been hitherto a stranger. The life of the artist is moreover comparatively free from the brain-tension and worries which injure the health of those who practise other fine arts. The life of the actor or musician is carried on, so to speak, at full pressure, combined with late hours, and in other ways is less healthy than that of our more distinguished painters. Life statistics support this view by showing that painters have a longer average of working life than the devotees of any other of the fine arts.

2805. When was the Greatest Courtesy Displayed by Two Armies on the Battlefield?

Perhaps the most extraordinary instance of quixotic courtesy on record was that shown by Bertrand Du Guesclin towards Edward the Black Prince. The latter, in 1367, was assisting Pedro the Cruel, of Spain, against Henry of Trastamare, with whom was allied the French Constable. Henry, being at the head of 70,000 men, determined to engage the enemy, who numbered but 22,000, in open field. To this Du Guesclin, knowing from experience the resistless valour of his foes, demurred, suggesting the expediency of guarding the passes rather than of exposing a raw soldiery to the chance of defeat. When, however, his opinion was slighted, he, despite his distrust in his followers, considering it cowardly to assail unawares a gallant foe with

such overwhelming odds, formally challenged the English Prince, asking him to appoint time and place of battle. The challenge being accepted in the chivalrous spirit in which it was given, the two armies encountered each other near Navarrete, with the result that Henry was totally defeated, and Du Guesclin, whom the Black Prince had specially charged his officers to guard from all injury during the progress of the conflict, taken prisoner.

2807. Why do Animals Raise their Heads when they Utter their Characteristic Cries? Are there any Exceptions to this Rule?

The primary use of the voice in animals is, as Darwin points out, in relation to the propagation of the species—their characteristic cries being the means of intercommunication between the sexes. To make the sound travel and the better to hear the response, animals would naturally raise their heads when calling each other. The voice gradually, probably, came to be used under other conditions of pleasure, pain, surprise, fear, etc., and each emotion evolved its peculiar cry. Rival males challenge each other by the loudness of their voices, and intense pain, like rage, appears to relieve itself by violent cries with raised head and neck outstretched. Some animals, like the lion and gorilla, seek to strike terror by their roar, while others only emit sounds in the last extremity of terror, like the rabbit. In each case the animals naturally assume that attitude of effort of which we have the most typical instance in the familiar farmyard rooster, who never appears to be able to raise his head quite high enough for the adequate expression of his feelings. On the other hand, the "music" of hounds breaks out when with noses lowered to the ground they cross the scent of their quarry. The pig's grunt and the lowing of the cow are other well-known exceptions to the rule.

2809. Is it Healthier to Eat in Company or Alone?

In company, for several reasons. The solitary eater is always tempted to take too large mouthfuls and swallow them too quickly, and either to eat too much or too little. Eating is only one part of feeding, and without digestion it is not only useless but injurious. Those who eat in company have to devote a certain amount of time to talking and attending to each others wants. This makes the period between the mouthfuls longer, and gives more time for digestion. Then, again, conversation at meal-times usually takes a cheerful turn, and the tone of both mind and body is raised, the heart and nervous system act better, the flow of digestive juices is stimulated, and a larger amount of actual nourishment is obtained from a smaller quantity of food. In a word, the man who eats in company, eats more like a man and less like an animal than he who feeds alone, so his food does him more good in every way.

2810. Why does Severe and Continued Pain Cause Thirst?

Painful emotions, such as fear and pain, inhibit or check the nervous mechanism that excites the secretion of saliva and so stop the flow, as was well shown in the old rice ordeal, where fear parched the mouth, but why they do so it is hard to say, except that they derange the nervous system generally, and thirst, together with cold sweats, faintness, trembling, etc., are the results of the nervous mechanism being out of gear. The dryness of throat and resultant thirst is far more marked if the pain be accompanied with shock, and this is very apparent on the battlefield and after severe accidents and operations, when the subject's only thought is for water. If there is no shock the thirst is very much less, and but few people complain of thirst with toothache, although the pain may be continued and severe, even more severe than after rifle-shot wounds, but with the latter there is always shock, and therefore intense thirst. Pain and shock not only stop the secretion of saliva, but weaken the heart's action, and this may, in some way not yet understood, assist in causing thirst, for those who have fainted almost always complain of thirst as they recover. Loss of blood has a similar result.

CONDITIONS.

We shall be glad to receive replies to any of the questions asked here from our readers. Each reply must bear the writer's name and address. We shall print the best reply to each question, and shall pay for all matter printed at our ordinary rate of two guineas a column. The same reader may send replies to any number of queries. Envelopes should be marked "Replies," in the top left-hand corner, and answers to the questions in any issue of the paper must reach us by first post on the Tuesday of the week following that for which the paper is dated. Payment will only be made for replies published. Authorities on which replies are based must be given. Half-a-crown will be paid on publication for every question received which is considered worthy of insertion.

QUESTIONS.

2831. Have living women ever been used as shields in battle?
2832. Why are some flowers altogether barren?
2833. Which physical feature forms the most remarkable barrier between zoological provinces?
2834. Which of the lower animals shows the most intelligent appreciation of music?
2835. Does a brake on a two-wheeled cart help the horse in going down a hill?
2836. Which is the most difficult English fish to catch?
2837. Is there any definite relation between the birth-rate and the ages of parents?
2838. Has a pitched battle ever been fought between two great Powers nominally at peace with each other?
2839. Dating from William the Conqueror, how many different strains of blood are united in Prince Edward of York?
2840. Which modern trade is most hampered by legal restrictions?

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THE LIMITATIONS OF YOUTH.

I'd like to be a cowboy an' ride a fiery hoss
Far out into the big an' boundless West;
I'd kill the bears an' catamounts an' wolves I come
across,
An' I'd pluck the baldhead eagle from his nest!
With my pistol at my side,
I would roam the prairies wide,
An' to scalp the savage Injun in his wigwam would I
ride—
If I dared; but I dussen't!

I'd like to go to Afriky an' hunt the lions there,
An' the biggest ollyfunts you ever saw!
I would track the fierce gorilla to his equatorial lair,
An' beard the cannybull that eats folks raw!
I'd chase the pizen snakes
An' the pottimus that makes
His nest down at the bottom of unfathomable lakes—
If I dared; but I dussen't!

I would I were a pirut to sail the ocean blue,
With a big black flag a-flying overhead;
I would scour the billowy main with my gallant pirut
crew,
An' dye the sea a gouty, gory red!
With my cutlass in my hand
On the quarter-deck I'd stand
An' to deeds of heroism I'd incite my pirut band—
If I dared; but I dussen't!

An' if I dared, I'd lick my pa for the times that he's
licked me!
I'd lick my brother an' my teacher, too!
I'd lick the fellers that call round on sister after tea,
An' I'd keep on licking folks till they were blue.
You bet I'd run away
From my lessons to my play,
An' I'd shoot the hens, an' tease the cat, an' kiss the
girls all day—
If I dared; but I dussen't!

PAYING A COMPLIMENT.

We have heard of a lady of rare beauty who said,
upon a certain occasion, that the only real, disinterested
compliment she ever received was from a coal heaver,
who asked permission to light his pipe in the gleaming
of her eyes.

Another compliment, true and genuine, was paid by
a sailor who was sent by a captain to carry a letter to
the lady of his love.

The sailor, having delivered his missive, stood gazing
in silent admiration upon the face of the lady, for she
was very beautiful.

"Well, my good man," says she, "for what do you
wait? There is no answer."

"Lady," the sailor returned, with humble deference,
"I would like to know your name."

"Did you not see it on the letter?"

"Pardon, lady, I never learnt to read. Mine has been
a hard, rough life."

"And for what reason, my good man, would you know
my name?"

"Because," answered the old tar, looking honestly up,
"in a storm at sea, with danger of death afore me, I
would like to recall the name of the brightest thing I'd
ever seen in life. There'd be sunshine in it, even in
the thick darkness."

A DUMMY CHEQUE WITH A HISTORY.

PROBABLY you have seen those novel New Year's
gifts which take the form of a cheque, purporting to be
drawn on the Bank of Providence, and wishing the re-
ceiver of it 365 days of prosperity in the ensuing year.
The 365 days were filled in in the usual manner, and
appeared as figures at the left-hand corner of the
cheque, as would be the case with ordinary cheques.

One of these documents fell into the hands of a
humorous gentleman exceedingly well-known in the
shipping trade, particularly in that portion of it con-
nected with the North of England. By way of a joke
he sent this cheque to a friend in the North. This
gentleman was not deceived by the document at all, but
thought it might be passed on with advantage to the
community. He had an account with a firm of ship-
builders, and to them, as a remittance in account, he
forwarded this cheque.

The firm immediately returned him his account,
properly credited and receipted, with the usual letter of
thanks, and paid the cheque into their bankers. The
officials of the latter, apparently being still further
under the influence of the Christmas and New Year
festivities, took the cheque as a matter of course, and
posted it up for £365 to the credit of their customer.

The cheque found its way eventually to the Bankers'
Clearing House in London. The gentlemen of that
establishment evidently observe holidays in a more
austere spirit than their friends in the North. They
detected the error, and returned the cheque with the
simple notice that it should have been dated the 1st of
April.

PROGRESSIVE LOVE-LETTER WRITING.

New Eden, June 10, 1895.

MY ANGEL.—I am in Paradise! The thought of you is a
constant source of delight. I never knew what it was to be
happy before; but now the whole world is running over
with joy. Everything speaks to me of you! Since we
parted I have seen your face everywhere—in dreams,
in the sky, in the trees, in the flowers. The birds
sing your name, and the wind whispers it in the grass. Oh,
my darling! I have found heaven at last, and you have led
me into it. How I long to hear your voice again, to look
into your eyes, to clasp your hand! Believe me, there is
not a moment of the day when your image is not in my
thoughts. How shall I manage to exist until we meet
again? Do you think of me always, as I think of you? I
know you do! And now farewell for a few hours. A
thousand kisses, sweet! Do not fail to answer all my
letters promptly.

Your devoted, faithful lover,
CLARENCE.

New Eden, June 12, 1895.

SWEETEST.—I have just received your letter—the very
breath of your presence in it, the delicate perfume of
violets? How good of you to write so promptly! I dreamt
of you all last night, and I am dreaming of you now. The
fellows laugh at me for my absent-mindedness. What do I
care? I have something better to think of than logarithms
and Greek roots. But I must study a bit, I suppose, or our
secret will be suspected. So good-bye for now. I enclose a
leaf from the inmost heart of a rose. Kiss it for
me as I have kissed it for you!

For ever, your
CLARENCE.

New Eden, June 15, 1895.

DARLING.—You are too unkind. I know that I have
missed a day; but examinations are so close at hand, and
those two weeks while we were finding our heaven have
made such a gap in my work! You say that I love you less
than "my nasty old books." That is just like a girl! Why
can't your sex have a little common-sense? But there goes
the bell—confound it!

Hastily,
CLARENCE.

New Eden, June 20, 1895.

MY DEAR JESSIE.—Why can't you keep your temper? I
have not been lecturing you, and I have not neglected you.
One charge refutes the other. I simply asked you to have a
little common-sense, in view of the hard work that is
crowding on me just now. Of course, I am just as fond of
you as ever I was; but I can't write love-letters and grind
mathematics at the same time, and no reasonable girl
would expect it. You know that I love you. Why should
you insist upon my repeating it every single day?

Lovingly,
CLARENCE.

New Eden, June 25, 1895.

MY DEAR MISS NORTHCOTE.—I am sorry you feel as you
do. I thought you truly loved me. Love is always willing
to make sacrifices; love is always ready to make allowances.
Besides, a man cannot give up his whole time to sentiment.
It is different with women. This is a fact which you do not
seem to have taken into consideration at all. I shall have
more time after the present week, and will write you at
length my views upon this subject. Then, perhaps, you
can consistently claim that I am lecturing you!

CLARENCE.

New Eden, June 27, 1895.

MISS NORTHCOTE, DEAR MADAM.—I beg to acknowledge
receipt by parcel post of the package containing letters,
photographs, etc. I return also, by same means, like
articles of yours in my possession. Kindly acknowledge
upon delivery, and oblige,

Yours respectfully,
CLARENCE MURCHISON.

ALMOST PERSUADED.

THIS year if any mistletoe
Within her "old oak hall" is found,
I'm going to propose to her—
To leave it there the whole year round.

OLD LADY (anxiously): "Does this train stop at
London?"

Porter: "Well, if it don't, madam, you will see the
biggest smash-up you ever see."

VISITOR: "Why, how big you are growing, Tommy!
If you don't look out you will be getting taller than
your father."

Tommy: "I don't care if I do. I'll get even then.
Pa'll have to wear my old trousers cut down for him."

A POLITE DOG.—Mother: "Did you thank the
gentleman who carried you across the crowded street?"
Wee Son: "I tried to, but I didn't know what to say
—the words wouldn't come somehow; but I think it's
all right, 'cause my dog wagged his tail enough for both
of us."

A FEAST OF DOLLS.

A PECULIARITY of Japanese shops is that only such
goods are displayed as are appropriate to the season of
approaching festival. Instead of displaying a general
stock of goods, as do all shopkeepers in England
throughout the year as soon as the festival season is
over, they are immediately packed up and carefully laid
away for another year.

On the third day of the third month is the "Hina
Matsuri," or, as it is generally called, the "Feast of
Dolls." It is devoted to the girls, and is considered by
them the greatest day of the season, and in years gone
by was duly celebrated by all families with great pomp,
ceremony, and preparation.

Most of the dolls on view are from three inches to
eighteen inches in height, and dressed to represent some
noted personage. Many still keep up the custom, and
some of the old families possess a stock of heirlooms in
the way of dolls that date back many years. When a
daughter has been born in the house during the previous
year, a pair of images are usually bought for her,
which she plays with until she is grown up.

When she marries she takes them with her to her
new home and gives them to her children, and each
year she adds to the stock as the family increases, so in
some families a great number are collected.

In all the shops are found complete sets of everything
belonging to the house, either for cooking, eating,
sleeping, or travelling. On the festival day all these
are brought out and arranged upon an elevated plat-
form, and offerings of saki, rice, and fruits are made

UNCOMFORTABLE RESEMBLANCE.

AN active member of the London detective force
narrates an amusing adventure, which shows that the
cleverest of men are liable to err when Nature sets
herself to outwit them.

"I was instructed to arrest a certain man, with whose
appearance I felt myself to be perfectly familiar, and I
kept a keen look-out for my customer. The very next
day I 'spotted' him on an omnibus in the Strand,
pursued the vehicle, and having satisfied myself by a
closer look, took him away to the station, he all the
while protesting that I had made a mistake.

"I had. He turned out to be a respectable gentleman,
with a most peculiar and unfortunate likeness to the
'wanted' man. I was much disappointed. Not only had
I missed the party I wanted, but I had bungled the job.
I was yet in my detective novitiate, and I got pretty
severely snubbed by my chief.

"The very next day, while walking down a street—in
Islington, this time—I stopped and rubbed my eyes.
Here was my man coming, dressed totally unlike the
stranger of yesterday. I tapped him on the arm. He
turned round and exclaimed: 'You, is it?' and I
informed him of my business. Entering a cab, we went
to the station, not another word passing between us.

"To my amazement and disgust he again turned out
to be the wrong man—the one I had arrested the day
before!"

"Why did you not explain?" I asked somewhat
excitedly.

"Sir!" he thundered, "from my experience of you
yesterday, I came to the conclusion you were no
gentleman;" and, darting a withering glance at me, he
disappeared.

A TREE THAT HURTS.

THERE has lately been added to the collection of
plants at the Botanic Gardens at Madras, India, a
specimen of a strange tree. It is in size scarcely more
than a bush, but other individuals of its species are
known to have attained, in their habitat in the Hima-
layas, Burmah, and the Malacca Peninsula, the dimen-
sions of a large tree, from fifty to seventy-five feet in
height. The Madras specimen is surrounded by a strong
railing, which bears the sign "Dangerous—all persons
are forbidden to touch the leaves or branches of this
tree."

It is, therefore, a forbidden tree in the midst of the
garden, but no one is tempted to touch it, for it is known
to be a "burning tree." This name is a misnomer, for
the tree stings rather than burns. Beneath the leaves
there are stings comparable to those of nettles, which,
when touched, pierce the skin and secrete a fluid which
certainly has a burning effect.

The sting leaves no outward sign, but the sensation of
pain persists sometimes for months, and is especially
keen on damp days, or when the place which has been
wounded is plunged in water. The natives in the part
of Burmah where this tree grows are in such terror of it
that they fly in haste when they perceive the peculiar
odour which it exhales. If they happen to touch it they
fall on the ground and roll over and over on the earth
with shrieks. Dogs touched by it yelp and run, biting
and tearing the part of their bodies which has been
touched.

A horse which had come in contact with a "burning
tree" ran like a mad thing, biting everything
and everybody that it could reach. A missionary
at Mandalay who investigated a leaf of the plant with
his forefinger, suffered agony for several weeks, and for
ten months felt occasional darting pains in his finger.

Have you bought yours yet?

NEW AND STRANGE.

A REMARKABLE eel has been discovered. This creature can, in fact, whistle. It is fifteen feet long, and several inches in girth. The scientist who is responsible for this statement. Well!

An inventor in Paris has perfected a folding crate for bicycles, made both in wood and wicker. These can be obtained for the price of one franc, and I doubt not that all those who have had anything to do with sending bicycles by train in this country will regard the novelty with considerable favour.

At this time of the year, when heavy dews, cold winds, and hoar frosts are the order of the day, or rather night, warmth and comfort are points for everyone to study. Therefore particularly interesting to all readers of P.W. will be the new Patent Oil Stoves for heating purposes introduced by the Frank Rippingille Stove Co., of Plume Street, Aston, Birmingham, which for cleanliness, convenience, economy, and elegance commend themselves to all lovers of the artistic and useful.

THE irresponsible cyclist is not allowed in Vienna. Before permission can be obtained to ride in the public streets every cyclist must pass a preliminary examination, riding between boards laid on the floor without touching the sides or edges of them. At the word of command they must be able to dismount either to the right or left, or to jump off by the step behind. Until a rider is proficient at these exercises no licence can be obtained for riding on the highways. All of which shows the high good sense of the Viennese officials.

EXPERIMENTS in crossing rivers have recently been made by the Austrian cavalry with water-tight haversacks filled with straw. Four of these were formed into a sort of raft, held together by three sabres; on these five men got astride, the foremost steering with a pole, and the horses were led, swimming. It took eight minutes to prepare, eight minutes more to cross a river six hundred and fifty feet wide and twelve feet deep, and two minutes to re-saddle on the opposite bank; so the five men were ready for action on the other side in eighteen minutes after the order to cross was given. Boats were also made with the haversacks, stiffened by iron bars or cavalry sabres, in which twelve or fourteen armed men were ferried over.

THERE are two ways, so far as I know, of killing a chicken. One is by means of a knife, the other by twisting the neck. Both require a degree of proficiency which is seldom to be found, and after two or three attempts have been made to exterminate its life the chicken, who must have gone through indescribable suffering, will often not only display such muscular activity as might occur after death, but give unmistakable signs of vitality by cackling. It is extraordinary that no more precise method has up to the present time been discovered, and I gladly welcome the news that a simple and inexpensive machine, which can be worked by hand or foot, and by which poultry may be killed as painlessly and expeditiously as possible, has recently been invented.

I MAKE no exception when I make the statement that the Magic Box, a little toy that has recently been invented, is the best thing of its kind that has been brought under my notice for some time past. It is a small round box of polished metal, inside which is a mechanical top, of which the point, a little bigger than the head of a pin, protrudes through the lip. Now this point is magnetised, and revolving at an enormous speed when the mechanism is set off has a most unexpected effect on any piece of steel with which it comes in contact. A hair-pin, for instance, placed against it will run up and down and in and out as if it were bewitched. All sorts of tiny figures mounted on metal pedestals are supplied with the box, and dance round and round the little point with an alacrity which is altogether surprising. The address of the manufacturer is Dock House, Billiter Street, London, E.C.

THERE is every probability that the patient and long-suffering inhabitants of London will not have much longer to wait for the promised supply of sea water. A scheme to achieve this end is, in fact, to be laid before Parliament during the next session. It is proposed to draw a supply from the neighbourhood of Worthing, and the water will be forced by pumps of enormous horse power to the village of Steyning, which stands on the northern brow of the South Downs, at an elevation of several hundred feet above the level of the sea. From a vast reservoir at this station it will flow by gravitation over the Weald of Sussex and part of Surrey, and empty itself into another reservoir at Epsom. From this point the distribution to all parts of London will not present a problem of any particular difficulty. That the innovation will be welcomed is a fact that need hardly be emphasised. The success of the scheme clearly depends upon the price at which the water can be supplied, nor is there any reason to suppose that the charges will be exorbitant. From a medical, and, in fact, every point of view, this supply is greatly to be desired. It is only the railway companies who are likely to raise a dissenting voice, for since the sea water is to be brought to London, Londoners will no longer see the absolute necessity of taking the only alternative course of going to the sea.

Under the above heading we publish accounts of new and curious inventions and discoveries. Should any readers have something exceptional of the kind which they would like to communicate to the world at large, we shall be very glad if they will make this the medium for doing so.

If any reader of PEARSON'S WEEKLY wishes to communicate with an expert regarding an idea for a patent let him write to the Editor of this paper, marking the envelope PATENT. The letter will be handed to a gentleman well known in connection with patents, who will put himself in communication with its

PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE.

LORD ROSEBERRY is believed to be engaged upon the production of a novel.

THE full name of Chevalier, the music-hall singer is Albert Onesimo Britannicus Gwathveoye Louis Chevalier.

MR. MELTON PRIOR, the war artist, has never been wounded seriously, although he has received the scars of seven bullets.

ARTHUR ORTON, the Tichborne Claimant, now lives on the proceeds of a diminutive tobacconist's shop in the North of London.

THE Empress of Austria has probably beaten the record in regard to being a juvenile grandmother, for she was only thirty-six when her first grandchild was presented to her.

THE art of descending a Russian ice-mountain was taught to Mr. Labouchere by no less an exalted personage than the late Tsar of Russia—and no other King or Emperor ever taught Labby anything beyond.

HERR BENGARTEN, the Russo-German newspaper man, who started some fifteen months ago to walk—wherever walking was possible—round the world, is now in Turkestan. So far he has covered about 4,000 miles.

MR. BARNET BARNATO, the millionaire, who has written a play in collaboration with Mr. Haddon Chambers, has earned considerable reputation as an amateur actor. He is the father of three children, parts his hair in the middle, is clean shaven, except for a small moustache, and wears pince nez.

THE German Emperor is conservative in his literary tastes. He likes Shakespeare best of all authors, and has several editions of the poet's works in his library, both in English and German. These he has read and re-read and read again until he knows most of the notable passages by heart, from which he constantly quotes at considerable length. His favourite play is *Hamlet*.

MR. LOUIS WAIN, whose cat pictures have brought him no inconsiderable fame, originally intended to enter the musical profession. All his drawings are executed with the left hand. Last year alone he completed no fewer than 300 pictures—among them a special commission for the Emperor of Japan, who is devoted to cats. Mr. Wain has four models, and among them "Peter"—a cat which he regards as the founder of his reputation.

BISHOP WILMER, a well-known American divine, is responsible for a good story. One of his friends recently lost a much-beloved wife, and caused this inscription to be written on her tombstone: "The light of mine eyes has gone out." Nevertheless, the bereaved one married again within a year. Shortly afterwards the Bishop was walking through the graveyard with a mutual friend. When they arrived at the grave the latter asked the Bishop what he would say of the present state of affairs in view of the words on the tombstone. "I think," said the Bishop, "the words 'but I have struck another match' should be added."

THE original study for "Little Billee" of "Tribby" fame is Mr. William Bayfield, who is at the present moment devoting himself to the study of singing with a view to appearing before long in light opera. Mr. Bayfield is one of Mr. Alma Tadema's best models. Chance led him to adopt this work as a profession, for having attended a fancy dress ball at the Portman Rooms as Romeo, the artistic eye lighted on him there and pleaded for a sitting. So easy were his poses that he was forthwith persuaded to desert his previous occupation, and was soon earning such salaries in the studio that he has since been able to realise his one ambition to go on the stage. Although he declares that he is not yet musically proficient, he has already appeared in several parts with marked success, and when his vocal education is completed is likely to have a very rosy future before him.

PRINCESS MAUD OF WALES, whose betrothal is a matter of recent history, is not over fond of the formalities and attention which her position demands. In days gone by, when the Duke of York was often to be seen walking incognito about London, it was usually his youngest sister who accompanied him, and on more than one occasion she has joined parties in a country house under an assumed name. Introduced as a new-comer by a chaperon whose position was sufficient guarantee, "Miss Mills" was always a favourite with all those with whom she came in contact, and, as a rule, the men of the party were her devoted slaves at once. Needless to say, their advances were, with gentle dignity, discouraged. The Princess, as every one knows, wears an eye glass, and beyond this, it is highly interesting to know that she does not altogether disapprove of an occasional cigarette. To add to her charms she is an enthusiastic bicyclist, a clever horsewoman, a good shot, and an expert swimmer, while for many years she has shared her mother's delight in photographic work.

JAMES GORDON BENNETT, editor and proprietor of the NEW YORK HERALD, spends the greater part of his time in Paris attending to the production of the Continental edition of his paper. There he may usually be found in his office at 120, Avenue des Champs Elysées, the floor littered an inch deep with letters, the table before him piled with unread messages, and the smug valet at the door for ever gliding in with dispatches from all corners of the world. Here he sits immersed in a thousand cares, strong, acquisitive, suspicious, generous, quarrelsome, the master of many secrets, and the incarnation of international gossip. No man among his three thousand editors, reporters, and correspondents performs so great a share of work as he. Nothing is too minute to escape his alert mind. He works furiously, wearing out those around him, and flashing out ideas on the most opposite subjects almost in the same breath. He despises what is commonly called fine writing, and consequently the HERALD has never been famous for its literary style. Mr. Bennett writes or dictates a great part of the editorial matter in the columns of his paper.

FOOTBALL NOTES.

THE first International game of the season under Rugby Union rules will be played at Blackheath on January 4th next, the opponents being England and Wales. A few remarks anent some of the more prominent players likely to be seen in this match will therefore be apropos at this moment. Many members of both teams have been alluded to already in this column, and it is therefore not necessary to refer to them at any length this week.

BANCROFT, as a matter of course, comes in once more for the position of full-back. He is only twenty-three years of age, but has played in every match for Wales for several years past. A. J. Gould is very nearly ten years older than Bancroft, and has played in the team regularly for an even longer period. A great surprise to the general public is the selection of F. H. Dauncey for one of the wing three-quarter positions in preference to T. W. Pearson, who has generally been supposed to be very nearly the best outside man of recent times. Llanelly have fared so well in their matches with other Welsh clubs, as well as with outsiders, that it is no surprise to find them contributing several men. Badger played last year; he is little and good, and almost tireless. Cliff Bowen, brother of an old International from the same club, has long been regarded as a certainty for International honours sooner or later. Both Llanelly halves, Davies and Morgan, have been selected; if either one is unable to play both will stand down and the Cardiff pair, Sweet-Escott and Selwyn Biggs, will step up in their place.

A. M. JENKIN, the captain of the Swansea club, is a forward who has quite recently come into the front rank of International players. Although he has played for Swansea for the past three seasons, it was not until the match with Ireland last season that he was chosen to play for Wales. He was immediately recognised as one of the best forwards in the Principality, and his place in this year's games is secure. Though of Welsh parentage, Jenkin was born in Hampshire. As was C. B. Nichol, another member of the Welsh team for the match with England, and several other Internationals of the past, he was educated at Llandovery School. The Swansea "skipper" is finely proportioned, close on six feet in height, a sound scrummager, and persistent in following up.

WALLACE H. WATTS, another of the Welsh forwards, is much more widely-known than Jenkin, for he has played in almost every match for Wales for the past four years. In build he is very much of the same stamp as Jenkin, though possibly a little taller and a little heavier. Like Jenkin, too, he is by no means a shirker of the hard work which falls to the lot of the forward, but shines more particularly in open play, being fast, and clever with hands and feet. His first experiences of the game were gained with the Maindee F.C., but after a comparatively brief apprenticeship he joined the Newport team, of which he has been one of the mainstays for the past five years. He is now twenty-five years of age, and consequently may look forward to several years' service for his club if not for Wales. He was born in Gloucestershire, and has several times played for that county.

THE English fifteen, though constituted quite differently from last year, contains but four men new to International honours, these being four of the Yorkshire forwards, Whiteley, Starks, Ward, and Rhodes. These men have found their opportunity to push to the front through the defection of the leading Yorkshire clubs from the Rugby Union; but many good judges aver that they are better players in every way than those whose places they have taken in the Yorkshire team. Three of them come from the Castleford club, which has had a singularly successful career so far in the Yorkshire Senior Competition, their only rivals to the championship of which are Leeds Parish Church. Most of the other English players are well-known by reason of their past services, though several years have passed since either Houghton or Valentine was last seen in an International team.

CURIOUSLY, all but one of the English forwards hail from Yorkshire, although Bromet and Mitchell have latterly been chiefly associated with Southern football. The exception is Godfrey M. Carey, last year's captain of the Oxford University fifteen. Carey was born in one of the Channel Islands, and was educated at Sherborne School. He got into the Oxford fifteen in his first year at the 'Varsity, 1891, and played regularly in the team for four years. It is, of course, well within my readers' memory that he was one of the most brilliant forwards in the South team last year, and afterwards played in all the International matches. He is now twenty-three years of age, just under 6ft. in height, and weighs 13st.

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OUR STAMP ALBUM.

No. 20.

In the Stamp Album No. 13 we described at length a new issue of stamps for British Central Africa, the lower denominations of which bear the annexed design. In subsequent issues much additional information was given about the country for which they were issued, which really should have been called British Nyassaland, as there is another British Central Africa, administered by the British South African Company, and using stamps of that company's postal system surcharged with "B.C.A." Readers will bear in mind that we are not speaking of these later, but of the more recent regular issue, illustrated herewith. Probably for the reason that the set includes a number of high values, which will be used for fiscal, but not postal, purposes, collectors have turned a distinctly cold shoulder towards it. Now we have some news about the issue which will probably alter the attitude of collectorhood.

When the British Central African Commissioner was in England at the close of 1894, he ordered these stamps from Messrs. De la Rue and Co., but for some unexplained reason, nothing was said about their being printed on water-marked paper. Now the attention of the Crown Agents has been called to the fact, and an official answer has been received to the effect that the Commissioner's attention has been drawn to the error. The presumption is, therefore, that very shortly we shall have a new British Central Africa set on water-marked paper, and that this present issue will become rare and valuable.

It is worth noting that in France, or perhaps more strictly in Paris, stamp-collecting seems to be on the decline. This is all the more remarkable because everywhere else the philatelic fever gains new strength every year. The explanation given for the phenomenon in Paris is that collectors there have been wearied beyond patience by the flood of speculative stamps, of which their own multiplying colonial issues, not to mention the Obock, Djibouti, Morocco, Abyssinian, and other sets made in Paris, and remorselessly imposed on the trade there, have formed a considerable part. Anyone who has been in Paris during the year, and seen the lengths to which the pushing of this new and purely commercial philately has been carried, must have been prepared for just such a revolt.

The rage for collecting street posters has sprung up instead, and threatens to supplant philately altogether. The choicest artistic ability of the French capital has for years been turning towards this department, until now a whole school of designers of posters exists, containing names as well known as those of some of our own Royal Academicians. Fancy prices are already paid for early impressions of some of Cheret's designs, and a magazine has now been started to give monthly reproductions on a reduced scale of the most notable "affiche" work. It is to be noted, too, that London is beginning to take up this same idea. Exhibitions of English posters have been held, and their effect is already observable in the increased beauty and value of what we see now on the London hearings. The notion of collecting them may easily take root here, too.

If this does come about, and philately suffers in consequence here as it has in France, the blame will rest in about equal parts upon the stupidity of governments which hold art at arms' length in the making of stamps, and the folly of dealers who for years encouraged and fostered the Seebeck, and Siberian, and other philatelic trash. It has at last been recognised that a halt must be called, and the trade is now as keen as its clients to keep rubbish out of the market.

But a good deal of evil has been done which cannot be undone, and if new issues, surcharges, and postally-used fiscals cannot be kept within decent limits during the next few years, we may find a general popular revulsion against the idea of stamp-collecting. The very suggestion of such a calamity will send icy shivers through the veins of thousands—private collectors and dealers alike.

Without trouble, one can enumerate firms which, collectively, must have a million pounds worth of stamps in their safes to-day. If the "hobby" should begin to wane, fancy the consternation of these owners! If it should seriously decline in popularity, the havoc wrought in the values of those stocks would be equal to the devastation of a great fire in the City.

Who can wonder, for instance, that collectors should revolt against the swindling methods of the North Borneo Post Office? We have first an extremely pretty set of stamps, which all collectors are glad to see, and willingly spend their money for. We speak of the issue of 1894, of which we illustrate one of the familiar designs. But almost immediately comes this same issue again, with the colours shifted about, and the broad surcharge "Labuan" printed across the top. Now we get a third issue, this time reverting to the original colours, but with "Postage Due" surcharged upon the set. This makes a total of twenty-seven stamps, all practically alike, for the collector to buy, and that is an imposition he is justified in resenting.



But that is not the worst. The remainders of Borneo and Labuan stamps in use before this deer-and-peacock issue appeared, have been cancelled to order by the authorities by the sheet in great quantities, avowedly for the purpose of imposing upon collectors. Honest dealers like Messrs. Alfred Smith and Son announce in their lists: "These stamps have not been through the post, but were postmarked in sheets for sale to collectors." Other dealers, less scrupulous, have soaked off the original gum, broken up the sheets, and sold the stamps as genuinely-used varieties. This whole Borneo experience is enough to impel any man to give his album to the nursery for a plaything and forswear the very mention of the word stamps.

It is understood that the new 1896 Scott catalogue, to appear during the holidays, marks a notable advance in the price of Americans, particularly in departmental stamps. The higher Justice values, for instance, double in price, and there is a 30 per cent. or more rise all round.

The experiment of two colours, which the De la Rue colonial type has familiarised us with, has been extended to Gibraltar, where the 1 peseta bistre, heretofore all brown, now has the lower band of value in blue. We illustrate the type by a cut of the 5 centimos, which has not yet been altered.

("Science for the Unscientific" next week.)

ABOUT THE LETTERS J AND W.

It is a fact, not so well known but that it may be said to be curious, that the letters j and w are modern additions to our alphabet. The letter j only came into general use during the time of the Commonwealth, say between 1649 and 1658. From 1630 to 1646 its use is exceedingly rare, and I have never as yet seen a book printed prior to 1652 in which it appeared.

In the century immediately preceding the seventeenth it became the fashion to tail the last i when Roman numerals were used, as in this example: viij, for 8 or xij, in place of 12. This fashion still lingers, but only in physicians' prescriptions, I believe. Where the French use j it has the power of s as we use it in the word "vision." What nation was the first to use it as a new letter is an interesting, but perhaps unanswerable, query.

In a like manner, the printers and language-makers of the latter part of the sixteenth century began to recognise the fact that there was a sound in spoken English which was without a representative in the shape of an alphabetical sign or character, as the first sound in the word "wet."

Prior to that time it had always been spelled as "vet," the v having the long sound of u or of two u's together. In order to convey an idea of the new sound they began to spell such words as "wet," "weather," "web," etc., with two u's, and as the u of that date was a typical v, the three words above looked like this: "Vvet," "vweather," "vweb."

After a while the type-founders recognised the fact that the double u had come to stay, so they joined the two u's together, and made the character now so well known as the w. I have one book in which three forms of the w are given. The first is the old double v (vv), the next is one in which the last stroke of the first v crosses the first stroke of the second, and the third is the common w we use to-day.

CRITIC (who has dropped in for a little talk): "And what are your views on marriage?"

Artist (in no humour for argument): "Oh, I am wedded to my art."

Critic: "And I suppose you, too, consider marriage a failure?"

"What shall I do?" she moaned. "I have smashed my bicycle."

"Let me see the wreck," said her mother. "Why, these wheels are very light indeed!"

"Yes, the lightest manufactured."

"Well, there is no need to waste them. I'll take them to the milliner's and have some trimming put on them. They will make some lovely hats for you and your sister to wear."

THE PROFESSIONAL HABIT.—Here is a little tonsorial joke which, whether true or untrue, amusingly illustrates the force of habit. A hairdresser was summoned to a private house the other day simply to shave a pet poodle.

The young lady of the house, hearing a sound of a voice in the room in which the operation was being performed, put her ear delicately to the keyhole, and this is what she heard:

"Nice day, sir. (Pause.) Razor suit you, sir! (Pause.) Good deal of weather, sir, lately. (Pause.) A little powder, sir? (Pause.) Hair's very thin, sir, on the top; wants a bottle of restorer; shampoo, sir? (Growl.) Next!"

CAUGHT BY A MIRROR.

A CLEVER TRAP.

A MIRROR played an important part in detecting a Parisian rogue. The thieves of the French metropolis are the cleverest rascals in the world, and positively elevate their villainy to a science; in no other European capital is one half the ingenuity exhibited by this class of rogue.

The famous Duval eating-houses, or restaurants, are in all parts of the French capital, though they are all run by the same company. The professed object of this company is to serve excellent food in a good style and for a very moderate charge.

It has been lately discovered that a system of thieving was being practised upon these establishments, whereby they lost a considerable amount of small silver articles, such as forks and spoons, but by whom they were being taken it was difficult to find out. However, a careful watch was set, and with the following result.

It was found that a respectable-looking person would enter the dining-saloon and give his order for dinner, of which he partook. During the meal he conveyed one or more articles to the under side of the table, fixing them there by means of wax, with which he was provided for the purpose. Should the servant who waited upon him miss any of his spoons or other articles the rogue was still in no danger, and offered himself to be searched with perfect impunity, and an air of injured innocence.

Of course he was allowed to depart, but immediately after an accomplice would enter, order his dish, whatever it might be, seating himself at the same table whence he removed the secreted articles to his pocket, taking care that the waiter should not miss any articles from the table as served before him.

There would be no reason for suspecting this individual, who paid his bill, and departed to share the booty with his confederate.

A case of this kind occurred a few weeks since in the Place de la Madeleine, where the superintendent, suspecting the trick, allowed the first party to retire, after apologising for searching him. He, however, sent for a detective in plain clothes, and bade him watch that particular table.

Presently, after the departure of the first rogue, his confederate entered, seating himself at the table in question, and while taking his soup, began his work, little dreaming that the peaceable-looking person opposite, with his back towards him, was watching every movement in the looking-glass through a hole in the newspaper which he held before his face and was pretending to read.

It was almost as good as a play, and the detective was obliged to restrain himself, or he would have burst into a fit of laughter.

No sooner had the rogue succeeded in transferring the last of the forks and spoons to his pocket than he rose very leisurely, walked to the cashier's desk, and took out his money to pay for the meal. But at the same moment there was a hand laid upon his shoulder, and the detective very smartly slipped a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists.

The missing articles were found in his pocket, and he was marched off to prison.

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Available from 5 p.m. on Friday, December 27th, 1895, until Midnight Saturday, January 4th, 1896. (See column 2, page 427.)

Have you bought yours yet?

NEW SERIAL STORY.

The Final War.

The Story of the Great Betrayal.

BY LOUIS TRACY.

ILLUSTRATED BY ERNEST F. SHERIE.

SUMMARY.

TIME, 1898. War is declared against Great Britain by the combined Continental Powers. An attack on Worthing is repulsed. Irene, daughter of Lord Eskdale, British Ambassador at Paris, is engaged to Captain Edward Harrington, Lord Eskdale's Military Attaché, and Lieutenant Rodney, of H.M.S. *Magnificent*, to Harrington's sister Ethel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCE AND THE PEOPLE.

ENGLAND was in a wild ferment of joy on the following day. From all parts of the kingdom came accounts of special thanksgiving services in the churches and chapels, and of hastily convened meetings of Corporations, to give representative assurances to Her Majesty the Queen, and to the Government, of enthusiastic loyalty, and ungrudging support, no matter what might be the trials in store for the nation.

An hour before Mr. Balfour had made his great speech in the House of Commons, the Adjutant-General had issued telegraphic orders for the calling out of the first-class army reserve, and the mobilisation of the Militia and Volunteers. Regimental districts had been hard at work all night in making the necessary preparations, and the consequence was that when every man in the United Kingdom learnt in the daily papers of the dispersal of the allied fleet, he also became aware that his services were needed if he had ever borne arms.

The result was most gratifying to the authorities.

From every military centre came intelligence of men flocking to headquarters before the official notice demanding their presence had reached them, and in one instance, that of the 10th Regimental District, at Richmond, in Yorkshire, no less than eighty per cent. of the Army Reserve had rejoined the colours before Thursday evening. It may be remarked, in passing, that when the roll was called a few days later, prior to the drilling of the troops to their regiments, it was found that in this locality, which was typical of most other places, the magnificent total of ninety-seven per cent. of effectives had been reached.

At Manchester and Birmingham the volunteer battalions set a splendid example to their comrades elsewhere by unanimously deciding to place themselves at the disposal of the Government for service abroad, whilst in Ireland, where there are no volunteers, some amazement was created at Dublin Castle by an offer from the Mill Street district of Cork to supply a complete regiment of armed patriots. Scotland rose to a man, and the Welsh miners promised to supply the fleet with enough coal for a year and then take their places in the ranks.

The Press in London and the provinces not only inspired the people by magnificent reports of the attack on Worthing and the way in which the British Fleet had maintained its unsullied reputation, but strengthened their courage and resolution by the calm dignity with which the atrocious action of two apparently friendly Powers was discussed.

"Never," said the *Times*, "has England been face to face with such terrible odds; never has she looked with more prophetic serenity to the golden era of renewed peace and prosperity when the battle-clouds shall have passed away. Our most venerable statesman has told us that it is our duty to 'earn anew the gratitude of the world,' and we would fain believe that the unfortunate peoples of France and Germany will not stand aloof from testimony in this regard when the demons of greed and vain glory shall have ceased to blind their eyes to the horror and misery into which they have temporarily plunged a large portion of humanity."

The *DAILY TELEGRAPH* meant well in writing a glowing eulogium of the Worthing Volunteers, but in dealing with the disparity of numbers between the allied troops and the Major's stalwart band of riflemen, happened to quote Byron:

Of the three hundred give but three
To make a new Thermopylae,

with the inevitable result that Major Perkins was christened Leonidas for the rest of his life. And he rather liked it.

Of course the *PALL MALL GAZETTE* also broke into rhyme, of broader vein, heading its leading article thus:

Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just,
But four times he who gets his blow in just.

But it was reserved for Mr. T. P. O'Connor in the *SUN* to give a graphic personal touch to the crisis by thus describing the scene in the House of Commons:

"Men gazed at Mr. Balfour through a mist of horror—a mist of blood I had almost written—and so it seemed to me at that supreme moment in the history of the mother of parliaments. Pallid, dumb, stricken though we were—physically and intellectually palsied with the fearfulness of the announcement—yet were the Irish members keen to notice the rancorous venom with which Mr. Chamberlain plunged, aspen-like, into the debate. When the rough nobility of my friend, Dr. Tanner, showed itself in its shirt sleeves to an astounded House—to be cheered with a frenzy that not even the bitterest partisanship had hitherto evoked—I looked at the Colonial Minister to note how the fierce tumult of the scene affected that sphinx-like and malignant nature. He was to the careless glance outwardly unmoved—frigid, keenly observant, utterly passionless—but to me, versed as I am in every mood, in each hidden

emotion of this enemy to the Home Rule cause, there was clear and convincing proof of the tornado that raged within. His eye-glass dangled on his breast, and his orchid had fallen unnoticed to the floor!"



Lord Wolseley, who at 2 a.m. had lain down on a couch in his room at the Horse Guards, rose at 5.30, and by seven o'clock had made all arrangements for a grand review of regulars and volunteers in Hyde Park.

The parade was fixed for two o'clock, and the early editions of the evening papers announced that T.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales,

the Duke of Connaught, the Duke and Duchess of York, and other members of the Royal Family would attend in State.

The Commander-in-Chief knew exactly what he was about in ordering this seemingly unnecessary pageant. No man in England better realised the tremendous extent of the struggle upon which the country must now embark for self-preservation. It was above all things needful that the spirits of the people should be buoyed up by every resource, and a fine military display, in all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, was a prompt and fitting sequel to the thrilling news flying hourly across the length and breadth of the land.

Londoners of all ranks crowded into the Park.

Great ladies were there in their carriages, representatives of every class and section of society came to gather inspiration and hopefulness from the spectacle. Not that there were many troops present. A selection rather than an absolute assembly of the forces at the time within hail of the Metropolis had been made by the Commander-in-Chief. The Blues, the 1st and 2nd Life Guards, two battalions of the Coldstream Guards, four squadrons of the Scots Greys, the complete regiments of the 17th Lancers, the 8th Hussars, and the King's Royal Dragoons, two batteries of Horse Artillery, and a battery of Field Artillery, together with some twelve thousand Infantry, both regular and volunteers, made up the parade.

The sun, shining down upon this brilliant assemblage of bright-coloured uniforms, with steel cuirass and glittering accoutrements sparkling in its rays, almost robbed the gathering of its fierce significance.

Public enthusiasm, too, knew no limits. As regiment after regiment filed on to the parade ground cheers were raised for them, and although some of the battalions were better known to the crowd than others, there was no discrimination in the heartiness of the applause accorded to each.

When well-known officers began to arrive there were further manifestations of cordiality from the thousands of onlookers.

The advent of the Prince and Princess of Wales, accompanied by their daughters, the Duke and Duchess of York, the Duke of Connaught, and a brilliant suite, caused such an outburst of popular enthusiasm that the progress of the Royal party through the Park to the saluting point was purposely made slow.

Even then it seemed as if the people were unable to give complete utterance to the tumultuous feelings of loyalty and national pride which actuated them. It was rapidly noticed that the Princess of Wales and the other Royal and distinguished ladies in the party were simply attired in

English, Scotch, and Irish products of the loom and mill. Not a single inch of foreign ribbon or lace was visible on their garments, and the people quickly saw that if example could achieve it, Her Royal Highness the Princess



of Wales, with her ever-ready tact and accustomed good judgment, had given the initiative to a movement on the part of the women of England to wear only home-made fabrics during the progress of the conflict into which England was now plunged.

On reaching the saluting point the carriages were drawn up in semi-circular form, and the Prince of Wales, who wore the uniform of a colonel of the 1st Life Guards, quitted the barouche, where he was seated by the side of the Princess,

and mounted a handsome charger which was in waiting. The Duke of York, the Duke of Connaught, and such members of the suite in waiting as were military officers, followed this precedent.

The parade was for inspection purposes rather than for the practice of manoeuvres. In fact, it would have been impossible for any general to move his troops to any extent over the Park, owing to the dense crowd of citizens of London which on all sides surrounded the battalions now drawn up in line.

Sir Redvers Buller was in command, and it was noticed that after the troops had gone through a few movements in the manual and firing exercise, a communication made to him by the Prince of Wales caused General Buller to so dispose the line that the troops were massed in a hollow square, of which the open side was occupied by the carriages of the Royal party. When the necessary quarter column formation for this change had been effected, the Prince of Wales moved forward in front of the brilliant staff by which he was surrounded, and it was quickly seen that he was about to address the gathering.

Such an unprecedented incident appealed so strongly to the dramatic unities of the moment, that a marvellous silence fell upon the thousands of people who witnessed it. In a strong, firm, and evenly-balanced voice, which reached to a very considerable distance, His Royal Highness then spoke as follows:

"Sir Redvers Buller and officers and men of the Garrison of London. In addressing you briefly to-day I depart from established custom in order to utilise this favourable opportunity of conveying to you, and through you to the people of the British Empire all the world over, the sentiments of Her Majesty the Queen at this supreme hour in the history of Britain. Her Majesty charges me to say that she recognises with a delight intensified by life-long conviction, the indomitable faith and loyalty which characterise the English-speaking people at a moment when such qualities are in the most urgent demand.

"The tremendous nature of the struggle into which we are forced by the action of two great countries, but yesterday deemed our friends, is as well known to Her Majesty the Queen as to her subjects. Her Majesty is beyond all things gratified to perceive that in this hour of stress and terrible danger her people are as steadfast to themselves, as true to their convictions, as faithful to the traditions of their forefathers, as Her Majesty has ever believed and has ever known them to be in times of difficulty or peril."

His Royal Highness paused for a moment, and a low murmur of applause and of keen appreciation swept through the multitude, which would not cheer so that not a word of the speech might be lost.

With even greater vigour of voice and animation of gesture the Prince of Wales continued:

"The dispositions made by the authorities for the defence of England against invasion and the protection of our highway through the world—the sea—will be made known to you as rapidly as circumstances may permit. Meanwhile I am enabled by the courtesy of the Commander-in-Chief to acquaint you with the fact that the preparations are now being rapidly pushed towards completion for the purpose of sending two strong expeditionary forces on the shores of France and Germany."

At this announcement a tremendous outburst of cheers came from the crowd, and, if the truth must be told, the assembled soldiers were as ready to join in the demonstration as anybody else, whilst their officers were too keenly interested in the momentous statement made by the Prince of Wales to take any definite steps towards checking such an unwonted military ecstacy as cheering in the ranks.

After an interval of some minutes' duration order was sufficiently restored to enable the Prince of Wales to proceed.

"It is only," he said, "in consequence of the urgent recommendations of Her Majesty's ministers that I have been restrained from taking my place in some responsible position with one or other of these army corps. For reasons of State, however, it is felt to be imperatively necessary that I should remain in England. No such galling if needful restrictions are imposed upon my son, the Duke of York, and my brother, the Duke of Connaught, and both these direct representatives of Her Majesty will fill their fitting positions as English princes at the head of British troops fighting for their beloved country."

Another great wave of emotion passed over the crowd. Men yelled themselves almost into a frenzy of excitement, women wept hysterically, some fainted, and the onlooker, unconscious of the cause of this high nervous tension, might have fancied himself in the Bois de Boulogne rather than staid and orderly Hyde Park.

"And now," said His Royal Highness in conclusion, "there remains for me to say to you all: 'Be of good cheer.' I believe that we shall emerge from this struggle a greater, grander, and more powerful nation than we have gone into it, if that be possible. Whatever of effort, whatever of self-denial may be necessary, will be given by all of us, from Her Majesty the Queen down to her least significant subject. In this matter we are a united and determined people, and I have yet to learn that there is any combination of armed force existing in this world which cannot be swept out of the path of Britain when she is aroused. Again, I wish you all God-speed."

With this His Royal Highness waved his hand to the people and the troops, and there came back to him the appreciative cheers of thousands upon thousands of voices.

The Royal Party now made preparations for returning to St. James's, and the Prince again seated himself by the side of the Princess. They proceeded very slowly through the Park, acknowledging cordially the vociferous acclamations from the living lines of people through which their carriage slowly forged its way.

Turning out of the park at Hyde Park Corner, the escort and vehicles were about to move off at a more rapid pace, when suddenly a man sprang from the crowd, dodged a policeman and mounted life-guardsmen who endeavoured

to intercept him, and jumped on to the step of the carriage in which the Prince and Princess of Wales were seated.

With a look of intense intensity in his eyes, he said to the Prince, speaking with desperate earnestness: "Will your Royal Highness hear me for a moment?"



Although naturally startled by the incident, the Prince of Wales was quick to prevent two members of his escort from cutting down the daring intruder, as he perceived in a glance that the man had no evil intentions in thus abruptly thrusting himself forward.

"What do you want?" he said to the stranger, who still clung desperately to the side of the carriage.

"I am an inventor, Your Highness," was the answer, "and I have discovered a weapon which can be rapidly turned to account, and which I believe will be sufficient in itself to save England even in the face of the odds against her. I am a poor man, and of no consequence. No one will listen to me with sufficient authority to take really practical steps towards rendering my invention of value. I thought that if at the risk of my life I could get speech of your Royal Highness, I might succeed in obtaining Your sympathy. I want no reward or self-aggrandisement of any sort. I am above all else an Englishman, and I hope that this fact will be sufficient excuse for my action at this moment."

He uttered these words with such absolute conviction in every tone, and yet with an air of decision and self-reliance that could not fail to be impressive, that the Prince of Wales was strongly disposed to hear him further.

"You know," he said, "that at such a time as this every moment of my life is taken up with important business. Do you feel justified in demanding half an hour from me to listen to you under these considerations?"

"I do, Your Royal Highness," was the reply. The Prince turned to the amazed commander of the bodyguard, who was standing near the carriage ready at a word or a sign to run his sword into the unfortunate inventor should he turn out to be what he looked like, namely, a dangerous lunatic, and said: "Captain Duncombe, kindly take charge of this man and bring him to me personally at Marlborough House at five o'clock. Tell the attendants that it is my express desire you should both see me in person."

The officer saluted, and the inventor, with a look of utmost gratitude and satisfaction on his face, quitted his hold on the carriage and disappeared into the crowd in charge of his escort.

Punctually at the appointed hour Captain Duncombe and his companion, who had meanwhile made himself known as Henry Thompson, an electrical engineer in the employ of the City of London Electric Lighting Corporation, presented themselves at Marlborough House.

The officer had accompanied the man to the latter's lodgings in order to obtain a working model of the device which he wished to exhibit to the Prince of Wales, and before allowing it to be packed up had assured himself that it contained nothing in its essentials harmful to human life, however disastrous to that commodity it might prove in subsequent operation.

The Prince of Wales not only listened to Mr. Thompson with the utmost care and appreciation for more than half an hour, but astonished the Commander of the Royal Guard by requesting the loan of a magazine rifle. Some experiments were forthwith made in a coach-house, the doors and windows of which had been closed.

As a result of these strange proceedings Mr. Thompson was brought back into the Royal study whilst a messenger was dispatched for the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Welsley arrived five minutes later, and the whole matter, whatever it might be, was gone into again with him.

His lordship appeared to be quite as much impressed with Mr. Thompson's invention as the Prince of Wales himself had been, and the remarkable outcome of this poor and unknown electrician taking the desperate step of forcing himself upon the attention of Royalty in such unpromising manner was that on the following day he found himself at the head of a vast electrical manufactory, with practically carte blanche instructions from the War Office and Treasury to turn out as many duplicates of his invention as was possible by working day and night.

The influence of this episode upon the subsequent character of the struggle between England and her enemies became evident later on.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VOYAGE OF THE "HORNET."

FROM the course of events it has been made clear that Lieutenant Rodney accomplished, without hitch or deviation of any sort, the chief part of the special mission upon which he was so suddenly dispatched by Lord Salisbury.

It was not until a fellow-countryman entered the mail train at Bologna, late on the Wednesday evening, that Rodney learnt the full significance of his journey. The Italian newspapers were selling in hundreds in the station, and a chance inquiry made by the new arrival elicited the fact that war had been declared and the allied fleets were then on their way to the English coast. The Englishman who gave this information was himself intent upon catching the *Peninsular* at Brindisi in the hope that he might be able to get home by that means, as the possibility of crossing the Continent by train was practically out of the question.

The *Peninsular* was true to her appointed time. Rodney had little leisure to make some purchases to complete his scanty outfit before he stepped from the marble quay to the deck of that fine steamer. A brief conversation with the captain led him to give some emphatic orders to the chief engineer, and when the *Peninsular* swung out of the little harbour, with its quaint windmill-shaped castle guarding the entrance, the log forthwith recorded a speed of seven-teen knots per hour. There would be no bonus for officers or engineers for that voyage, owing to the economy of coal consumption.

On Friday morning at six o'clock Valetta was reached, and when the *Peninsular's* anchor rattled from her bows, Midshipman Fisher, of the *Hornet*, swung himself on board from a steam launch and inquired for Rodney.

"Sir Arthur Fremantle is waiting for you at the castle, sir," he said, saluting, as Frank had hastened towards the youngster when he saw him climbing up the ship's side. "He is anxious to see you immediately."

"Tumble my traps overboard, and I will be with you in half a tick," was the answer, and Rodney hastened off to bid the Captain "good-bye," in case circumstances should prevent him from rejoining the *Peninsular*, as the ship left again in two hours.

The next time he set foot on the vessel's deck, Ethel and he were en route to Egypt for their honeymoon tour.

"What's the news here?" he inquired as he took his place by the midday's side in the stern-sheets of the little launch which rapidly throbbed its way to the steps of St. John.

"We're all got the jumps," was the answer. "The fleet left yesterday morning at half an hour's notice, bound for Gib., we believe. At twelve o'clock every blessed cable was cut somewhere or another, and since then we have been drinking pegs and asking each other 'What's up?' There are 8,000 troops here and 1,000 militia, and every man jack is a complete note of interrogation in himself."

"We are at war with France and Germany," said Rodney. The boatswain heard the reply, and, as discipline forbade him to yell, or curse, or even whistle, he pressed the throttle-valve hard down and made the launch hum with excitement.

"Then what in thunder was the *Hornet* left here for?" asked Midshipman Fisher, scarlet with indignation at the thought that there was a row going on and he was not in it.

The *Hornet*, it may be explained, is a diminutive torpedo-boat destroyer, very smart and very small, so there was no wonder that Rodney laughed as he answered: "All right, young'un. Don't be alarmed. You'll see sparks before this business is over."

There was no time for further conversation. When the launch reached the landing place Rodney was met by the Assistant Military Secretary, Captain J. S. Ewart, of the Cameron Highlanders, and taken straight to the Governor's quarters.

Sir Arthur Lyon Fremantle received his momentous intelligence with an air of deeper concern than Master Fisher had displayed.

"Seymour and I feared as much when your telegrams reached us," he said. "The word you used meant that we were to be prepared for the worst possible eventualities in the way of a hostile combination, and both Admiralty and War Office have repeatedly urged the necessity for momentary readiness for action. Have you heard that six French warships passed south of the island this morning at 5.30, steaming rapidly eastwards?"

"No, sir. I have only been on shore five minutes." "I thought that perhaps it might be known to the people on the launch. We are secure enough here," went on the Governor, "but I wish we could do something more than act on the defensive only."

"Where were the enemy going, in your opinion, sir?" said Rodney.

"To seize the Suez Canal, undoubtedly, and to capture all the British merchant ships they may encounter. It is fortunate that they cannot fall in with the *Peninsular*, which may now escape. I suppose they will also occupy Perim, for the sake of the coal supply, and probably bombard Aden. By the manner in which they have telegraphically isolated us, I have no doubt that the garrisons of both places will be in ignorance of the progress of events until the enemy's fleet commences hostilities."

"Why should they not be stopped?" cried the naval officer, starting up excitedly from his chair.

"Stopped! What can we do?" exclaimed the Governor. "Blow up the Canal!" was the emphatic rejoinder.

"We can't blow it up by talking about it," remarked Captain Ewart.

"No. But the *Hornet* is here, and if she is ready for sea she can get to Port Said before the enemy's fleet," said Rodney, now thoroughly excited.

"She is in first-rate trim," said the Governor. "Sir Michael Seymour told me so himself, and he left her here to act as a dispatch vessel if necessary. Unfortunately her commander, Lieutenant Cator, has been very ill from island fever, and is still extremely weak."

"Send me, sir," cried Rodney. "You can forward a note to the Admiral by the *Peninsular* to explain my absence and your intentions."

"Lieutenant Rodney," said the Governor, cordially extending his hand, "you are a man of action. Go, and take my heartfelt thanks for your offer, which I gratefully accept. I leave all details to you, and Captain Ewart will take you to the Admiral Superintendent so that all the

resources of the dockyard may be placed at your disposal. It has always been the intention of the authorities to convert the Mediterranean into a French lake in the event of a war with France, and I see no harm in allowing Germany and Russia to share the privilege with her. I will communicate, as you suggest, with Sir Michael Culme Seymour, and I wish you good luck. Have you any plan? If successful do you return here?"

"I think, sir, it would be best to dash through the Red Sea and warn Aden. Perhaps the cable to Bombay may be uninjured, and we could thus give India timely information."

"It is a desperate project," said Sir Arthur Fremantle, with a kindly smile.

"It looks pretty stiff, sir, I admit," replied Frank, "but it may be easy enough. Will you let me write a line to be forwarded with yours?"

He hastily scribbled a note to Ethel, which ran as follows:

DEAREST.—If you hear that the Suez Canal is blown up, you may feel certain that I am all serene. See my mother and kiss her for me. I am skipper of the *Hornet* for the next week.

Yours ever,
FRANK RODNEY.

Before noon the *Hornet* was ready for sea, presenting a strange sight for such a trim little ship, as her decks were piled high with bags of coal to eke out her ordinary supply of fuel. Rodney was seeing to the careful disposition of several hundredweight of dynamite when a scrap of paper was brought to him by a hospital orderly, which bore in faintly-pencilled scrawl this message:

I have heard of your project. I know I can't be in command, but for God's sake take me with you. I will be as fit as a fiddle in a few days. Don't leave me here, there's a good fellow. Your old mes-mate,

GERALD CATOR.

"Where is Lieutenant Cator?" said Rodney to Master Fisher, who had grown an inch in height and girth since the morning.

"In the hospital, near the Gunners' Mess, sir."

"Take three men and bring him on board in five minutes, if you can."

"If I can!" said the midday, as he ran off. "As if I bloom in well couldn't!"

Shortly afterwards a pale and emaciated figure in the undress uniform of a naval officer, reclining on a long deck chair, with three tars and a midshipman shouldering a corner a-piece, was borne at the double out of the hospital and rapidly ferried on board the *Hornet*. That afternoon the Senior Surgeon reported Lieutenant Cator for being absent without leave, but, after a chat with the Governor, cancelled the report, and marked the register opposite his name: "Discharged cured."

(To be continued.)

WARM AFFECTION.

THEY skated together, but little they said, For they'd just been made known to each other. But he wished, as they over the bright surface sped, That they thus might through life be together.

A crash—they went through! "Oh, how awkward!" cried she.

"Tisn't deep; but has anyone seen us?" "Never mind—let me tell you—I love you," said he, "Since the ice is now broken between us."

"How will you have your eggs cooked?" asked the waiter.

"Make any difference in the cost of 'em?" inquired the cautious customer with the brimless hat and faded beard.

"No." "Then cook them on the top of a slice of ham," said the customer, greatly relieved.

It was late (time 2 a.m. New Year's morning).

Wife: "John, you are intoxicated again, in spite of your many promises to turn over a new leaf with the New Year."

Hubby: "Fate, m'dear—Fate—'gainst me—went Tom's—saw old year out—coming home found watch hour fast—had to do it all over 'gain—m'dear, fact, wonder is ain't worse than I am!"

A LITTLE girl, four years old, happened to be sliding upon the ice, when she suddenly fell heavily, and was evidently badly hurt.

At the sound of her sobs a friend rushed to her assistance, and caught her in her arms. "You poor little thing, and how did you fall?" she asked sympathetically.

The mite raised her head, and replied between her sobs: "Vertically." So much for kindergarten training!

FICTION.

TO A PHOTO.

A MAIDEN fair, beyond compare,
With tresses brown—yes, gold-brown hair;
A face like morning's, fresh and fair—
Ah, lovely girl!

Those eyes of blue—they must be blue!
A heart that beats for ever true,
A form divine, fair maid, have you—
My soul's a-whirl.

You greet me with a smile so sweet;
To know you would be joy complete;
And yet I fear we ne'er shall meet—
Sad, sad regrets!

Life's full of cruel blows, alack!
I love you, but I'll put you back
Just where I found you—in a pack
Of cigarettes!

THE WIFE SAFE DEPOSIT COMPANY.—We understand that a project has been formed for the establishment of a corporation with the name which appears above. From the prospectus, which has been sent us, we see no reason why the plan should not meet with favour, and obtain complete success. It surely is something entirely novel, and is without rivals in the field. The scheme to which we allude merits a few words of explanation.

A man leaving London for a few days to go to Paris on business, or to visit Manchester for a little intellectual ozone, is often at a loss to know just what to do with his wife. Incidentally to his business in the Queen City, he may have opportunities for cultivating the society of friends who would like to entertain him. If he takes his wife with him, his expenses are doubled, and he has to do the entertaining himself.

Thus after a weary day at work (the spot stroke barred) you are deprived of your natural rest at night, for you can get but little rest even in the most secluded box at the opera if your wife is with you and you have to explain what is going on. But a way out of these difficulties is provided by the Wife Safe Deposit Company.

The building secured by the company is ten storeys in height, with no fire escapes. This will recommend it at the outset. The custodians, door-keepers, clerks, in fact, the entire personnel of the establishment, will be women.

To prevent shopping excursions, the building will be surrounded with a high wall, and trained mice will be for ever running along its edges. This wall, it is needless to say, will present insurmountable difficulties to those attempting escape. The institution will be a blessing to the impetuous husband. He will conduct his wife thither, get a ticket for her, and leave her there until his return to town.

The use of fashion papers and parrots extra. Parrots instructed in English by sailors are excluded. Pianos in every room. This will give unprecedented opportunities for getting up the music that was so promptly dropped with the maiden name. A new lease of life may be afforded Chopin's Opus 69, or some similar gem, which was so largely instrumental in securing that greatest of all prizes—a good husband. Thus the romance of early days will return.

Among other advantages of the institution, the following may be remarked: No house-furnishings, milliners, modistes, coiffeurs, manicures, or diamond merchants will be admitted under any pretence. There is no insurance. But, then, wives are not given up until the storage is paid. When you return to town you may, if desired, present your ticket and get your wife. It is expected that married men will by this arrangement lessen their expenses by one-half.

THE BABY'S CHRISTMAS.—I'm a little one. I was just a year old on Christmas-Eve. That's the kind of Christmas stocking I am, and I do not care who knows it. They have treated me shabbily this year, and I won't stand it without complaining. It's my solemn opinion that babies have as much right to kick as grown folks, so here goes.

In the first place, I did not get a single thing in my stocking, not even a stick of toffee. Was that the right way to use a boy a year old? Suppose there are other children in the family, who is any better than me?

Ever since I came here I've had to exist on milk and gruel and biscuits, while the rest of the family feed on grapes, apples, nuts, and a hundred other good things. My brothers and sisters have had heaps of fun, while I have had to stick at home and put in half my time in

the land of Nod, and now they have given me the cold shoulder over this Christmas stocking business.

Cross? I was cross, of course! I heard 'em jawing away for a month before it came off. The children discussed what they were going to buy pa and ma, and after they went to bed pa and ma would tell what they were going to buy for the children—all but me.

With me between the same sheets they had cheek enough to say that a dose of paregoric would be a good enough Christmas present for me. I just put my fat heel in pa's ribs and clawed ma, and when they said I had the colic I chuckled to think they didn't understand my little game.

Every time anything was mentioned about Christmas I was left out, but when they tried to put me on one side they got the wrong boy baby by the ear. I can stand as much trouble as any other yearling of my size, but when they tread on my coat-tails my fighting weight balances a cartload of sand.

I saw the stockings all hung up and filled, and even then I waited to give that obstinate family one more chance. They didn't take it. Not a stocking was hung up for me, not a stick of toffee saved for the jewel of the family. On the contrary, mother slid into bed, and said: "Some day this little wretch will be big enough to enjoy Santa Claus."

"It will be years yet," replied the governor, as he turned over.

That's where they made the mistake. I waited until their eyes were closed, and then suddenly began to kick and howl. It was enough to make the cat laugh to see 'em skip out of bed and dance me about and rush for remedies; but I didn't stop until I heard them declare that the doctor must be summoned. I gave them another dose about one o'clock, and another at five, and when Santa Claus came down the chimney he had lively music to march by.

That wasn't much of a Christmas in our house, and I was the cause of it. The more I thought of the way they snubbed me the wilder I got, and when I'm cross things hum. They hummed at intervals all day, and when I had made the whole family wish they had never heard of Santa Claus the doctor was called in, looked at me, and said: "I can't see that anything ails him. I fancy it's temper."

And it was. Let 'em snub me next Christmas when I'll be old enough to walk, and they'll see what'll happen. I've got rights, and I'll have 'em, or break out with the chicken pox!

"WHAT was the trouble between you and young Mr. Softy?"

"Why, he said his brain was on fire, and I broke a hand grenade over his head."

JINKS: "I tell you what it is, there is nothing like having lots of friends."

WINKS: "I presume not."

JINKS: "No, sir. Just as quick as I lose a situation, my friends all rush round hunting for a new place for me, so as to save me the trouble of borrowing money from them."

A CERTAIN bishop, whom it would be cruelty to identify, is a victim of absent-mindedness. Dining at home one evening, he found fault with the flavour of the soup. The next evening he dined out at a large dinner party.

Forgetting for the moment that he was not in his own house, but a guest, he observed across the table to his wife:

"This soup, my dear, is again a failure."

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FACTS.

If a Japanese farmer has as much as ten acres of land, he is looked upon as a monopolist.

THE Irish mail-boats receive £95,000 a year subsidy. This is only £4,000 less than is paid for all the North American mails from Queenstown to New York.

W. S. GILBERT's play *Pygmalion and Galatea* is probably the most valuable literary property in the world. Its earnings have already exceeded £10,000.

AMERICA is the only country which can boast of a daily musical paper. It is called, appropriately enough, the *Preto*, is published on all seven days of the week, and has its headquarters at Chicago.

CHARLEMAGNE possessed a tablecloth woven from asbestos. He used to astonish his guests after dinner by gathering it up and throwing it into the fire, from whence he drew it cleansed from grime and other grease.

EVERYONE who has been in a Continental city at carnival time has seen the "confetti" which are thrown about in the mimic warfare in the streets. The making and selling of these tiny paper pellets constitutes an industry of some little importance. It is estimated that the Parisians alone spend £24,000 sterling, or 600,000 francs, upon them every year.

A PUZZLE which will amuse your friends runs as follows: A man entering a shop states that if the shopman will give him as much money as he has in his pocket he will spend sixpence. He does so. He also enters a second shop, and makes the same statement. Likewise a third shop, after which he had no money left. How much had he at the first?

IN Saxony no one is permitted to shoe horses unless he has passed a public examination, and is properly qualified. A great school at Dresden has students from all parts of the world studying "farriery." This includes not only shoeing horses, but their care and treatment—a provision that saves a great deal of money for farmers and others owning horses.

MUSIC-HALL songs find their way into all classes of society. A popular entertainer, who appeared recently before the Prince of Wales and party, gave his usual repertoire and was much applauded. The Prince then asked for something in which they could all join in the chorus, and he gave them "Linger Longer, Loo," and "Mrs. 'Enery 'Awkins," which proved greatly to their taste.

A SINGULAR "memento" ring was worn by Carl Hoffman, for many years chief editor of the *Wiener Tageblatt*, who died lately at Vienna. Down to his last hour he wore upon the forefinger of his right hand an iron ring, which thirty years ago he had made for him out of a link of the chain he had borne, as a political prisoner, during two long and weary years of incarceration, varied by hard labour.

A THIN plate of silver has recently been forwarded to the authorities of the Redemption Department of the Treasury at Washington, in the surface of which a ten dollar certificate had been pressed in such a way that it had become incorporated with the metal. A statement accompanied it to the effect that a workman in a silver-smith's factory had accidentally dropped the bill upon the plate of silver while the latter was passing through a rolling machine. This explanation being satisfactory, a fresh ten dollar bill was sent to the loser.

"THE slimmer the waist, the higher the wages," appears to be the rule among employees in some millinery and dressmaking establishments. A young lady writes from Glasgow alleging that in large provincial dressmaking and millinery establishments pressure, not only moral but physical, is brought to bear on the young ladies who serve in the "trying-on" departments in order to insure an elegant, slim, and thin waist, the better to show off the mantles they put on for the allurements of prospective purchasers. Their employers' motto is: "The slimmer the waist, the higher the wages."

To attend to Her Majesty's wardrobe and toilette there are five maids, viz, three dressers, and two wardrobe women. The senior dresser, who has been many years with Her Majesty, is specially charged with the task of conveying orders to different tradespeople—jewellers, drapers, dressmakers, etc.; one dresser and one wardrobe woman are in constant attendance on the Queen, taking alternate days. When the Court is at Windsor the members of the household in attendance are one lady-in-waiting, two maids-of-honour, a lord-in-waiting and two equerries, one groom-in-waiting, also the keeper of the privy purse, the private secretary, assistants in both departments, and the master of the household.

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VARSITY THEATRES.

THE Universities are famous for their enthusiasm. To be half-hearted over anything, in fact, with the exception of reading, for which there is seldom much time, is an inadmissible offence, a proceeding contrary to the very nature of the undergraduate. The Varsity man, in a word, is not hard to amuse; but if he likes a thing he says so, and if he does not like it he says so also, with the utmost good humour, indifferent to all consequences, and with the most honest and candid criticism in the world.

This is what lends its peculiar charm to a University theatre. True, first-class London companies do not often travel so far afield; it is usually provincial actors and provincial actresses—sometimes good and sometimes very bad indeed—who occupy the stage. But what does this matter when the audience itself, alert, sensitive, quick to appreciate, and unhesitating in its disapproval, affords the lion's share of the entertainment. To the Varsity theatre there are two infallible "draws"—a pretty actress and the prospect of a "rag"—a word which does not mean anything so very terrible after all, and yet is quite untranslatable to do it justice.

The undergraduate is a connoisseur of beauty, of music, of histrionic skill, of everything, in fact, in the whole range of Art. Now and then he is a great musician and a first-class actor himself. The performers feel and show themselves on their mettle. They feel themselves arraigned before a tribunal from which there is no appeal. Masterly and yet lenient, with all its critical faculties alert, and yet prepared for enjoyment, prepared to cheer rather than to sneer, representative of intellect and equally representative of genuine impulse, genuine feeling, genuine emotion, an epitome, in short, of national sentiment at least to that extent which is worth anything to an actor or actress whose reputation is still to be made or lost. The undergraduate judges by merit alone, and a pretty face counts on the stage for excellence.

Both at Oxford and Cambridge the theatre is not unworthily popular. On some nights a third of the whole University may be found, packed away somehow or other, in the auditorium, while the fact that it is only during a certain number of nights each term that plays may be produced in either University makes a full house for even a mediocre performance more or less of a certainty. It is laid down by the laws of the Medes and Persians that the undergraduate attends always in cap and gown—a formality, at all events until recently, rigidly observed at Cambridge, and totally ignored at the sister University, where in deliberate defiance of Proctors and "bull dogs," custom seems to have overruled the time-honoured statute.

At Cambridge, moreover, etiquette is more strict in the matter of costume, and to my fancy, high or short, handsome or plain, distinguished-looking, or insignificant pigmy, a man never appears to fuller advantage than in evening dress, cap, and gown. It is, to sum up in one word, perfection in the matter of dress.

Except for the absence of boxes there is little to distinguish the new theatre at Oxford, for instance, from any of the best London playhouses. But the stranger, if he is fortunate enough to secure a seat and cares to look down and round and all about him, recognises himself at once in a new sphere not wanting in any respect for interest. There is no blaze of jewels in the stalls, perhaps no array of pretty fur-lined cloaks revealing seductive glimpses of glistening arms and shoulders, and he will often listen in vain for the rustle of a lady's skirt, and look in vain for more than half-a-dozen fair intruders in white muslin or pink brocade, or whatever the material is that ladies wear at the theatre.

In the stalls and the pit and the circle men appear just as they have dined in hall or their rooms, or at the "Union," in Norfolk jackets that have often seen plenty of wear, and trousers which are comfortable because they are old and unpaid for, and immaculate linen which is quite indispensable, and the one extravagance that the undergraduate does consider it his bounden duty to allow in the matter of dress.

The stranger is quite unconscious that the quiet-looking man sitting next to him is the President of the Union, and will be Prime Minister one day if things turn out as they should; he only half guesses that the stalwart young man who has just come in is a triple blue and an athlete whose reputation has spread to the farthest ends of the world. But for all his lamentable ignorance he looks round on the motley throng with ever-increasing attention.

The material which fills the pit is the same material that fills the stalls. Only one section is on its best behaviour, and the other is not; the one is complaisant and dignified, while the other can applaud as loud as it likes, and hiss as often as it wishes, and make audible remarks to the discomfort or solace of the players.

By an inexorable law of human nature, before even the curtain rises, expectation, like all other pent-up things, finds an outlet in intermittent applause. At Cambridge the appearance of the orchestra is the signal for a wild outburst of clamour above which one word, the name of a one-time leader of the orchestra is audible. And this is a relic of one never-to-be-forgotten occasion on which the now famous musician mistook the ironical cheers of the house at the tardy rise of the curtain as a tribute to himself as he appeared before the footlights and placed his hand to his heart and bowed his

smiling acknowledgments, calling down such a wild hilarious scream of joy that no actor has ever received a like ovation nor will.

It is a law with the undergraduate to do whatever is not expected of him. Unless the performance merits his respect he becomes flippant and fractious. He laughs at the immature representation of pathos, and is stolidly indifferent to impossible attempts at humour.

For the rest he is, as I have said, sensitive. His patriotism is never for a moment in dispute. Political questions at once arouse a storm. I remember once hearing a ribald jest from some performer at the expense of the House of Lords, and immediately a maelstrom of hisses cycloned around the building. At this the socialistic element broke out in loud applause; there were cheers and counter-cheers, and another hurricane of hisses until pandemonium reigned.

The undergraduate is generous, almost lavish, in his applause when the right note is struck. A popular song will be encored three, four, and sometimes half-a-dozen times. But in the matter of encores the house will brook no refusal. Sometimes an actor, in sheer self-defence, comes on and bows and discreetly retires again, and an attempt is made to continue with the play. Thereupon the thunder of applause redoubles. It grows and spreads and echoes, hands, feet, and voice. Everyone catches the infection. Even the impassive stranger feels himself enveloped in a sudden heating burst of half-boyish enthusiasm.

Finally the undergraduates have their way, as they usually do.

Yet the generosity of the audience is not content with the bare bestowal of applause. To those unaccustomed to first nights at the leading London theatres the reception the artistes receive, the showers of flowers that fall upon the stage, and the magnificence of the bouquets presented over the footlights must cause them to chew the cud of economic reflection.

Maud Millett was, and for all I know is now, the favourite actress at Oxford and the sister University. At one time there was hardly a man but had her photograph—and often an autograph one—on his mantelpiece, while the value of the flowers she has received from time to time as a graceful tribute to her pretty face and winsome ways must really mount to very large figures indeed.

On such occasions all the ingenuity of the florists are called into play, regardless of expense, and the rare exotics which the leader of the orchestra hands over the footlights, bound in gigantic streamers of the donor's college ribbon, will often cost £5, £10, and even £20!

In the interval between the acts the whole house is practically emptied. At Cambridge the outer doors of the theatre are closed, and the undergraduates walk up and down the long corridor which runs the whole length of the building. At Oxford they troop down the steps and out into the streets, hatless, and without cap or gown, regardless of college regulations and lurking "bull-dogs."

The fun of the evening, however, is yet to come. When the climax has been followed by the anti-climax, and the curtain at last falls, the stranger from his point of vantage notices none of that anxiety to be moving homewards which is so conspicuous in a London theatre, and as conspicuous a disgrace.

On the contrary, everyone keeps their seats, and above the tumultuous applause a general air of expectation is to be observed. Suddenly a shout of "Speech!" is raised in some quarter of the house.

Instantly it is taken up on every side.

"Speech! Speech! Speech!"

A moment later and you could hear a pin drop in the crowded theatre.

First the stage-manager comes before the curtain and says a few well-chosen words, and then the cheers break out afresh, and it is not until everyone who will come has come that the building slowly empties, and the cosmopolitan crowd disperses.

HER WINTER OUTFIT.

HER feet are shod in mannish boots,
Her hands are in a muff;
Her coat is of the warmest fur,
Her gown is heavy stuff.

Her collar, that she wears turned up,
Comes almost to her nose,
Then on her head she wears for warmth,
Two feathers and a rose.

HOUSEKEEPER: "You don't look as if you had washed yourself for a month."

Tramp: "Please, mum, th' doctors say th' proper time to bathe is two hours after a meal, and I haven't had anything you call a meal for six weeks."

"So you've become an inventor, Bezooks?"
"Yes, and I'm going to get rich. I've invented an indestructible paving material."
"What suggested it to you?"
"Well, I've been pastry cook in a hotel for a good many years, and—"
"Oh! I understand."

HER OPINION.

ONE of the homeliest men in Manchester has a beautiful little girl about five years old. The other day she was sitting on his lap with a handglass before her. She looked at her father a moment, then looked at herself and turned to her mother.

"Mamma," she inquired, "did God make me?"

"Yes, dear."

"Did He make papa, too?"

"Yes."

Then she took another look in the glass at herself. "Well," she said thoughtfully, "He's doing a great deal better work lately, isn't He?"

NATURE'S KITCHENS.

IN Iceland to cook food in the geysers is a regular portion of the tourist programme. Tea is infused with water from the Great Geyser, and trout is boiled in the Bleal, or hot water pond, which suddenly ceased to erupt after the Skaptar-Jokull convulsion of 1784. They require to be immersed for about twenty minutes to be cooked to a turn.

In the Yellowstone country a story is told of a fisherman, who, having caught a fine trout, merely turned on his heel, and, without taking his captive off the line, plunged it into a pool of hot water, from which in a short time he drew it ready for his meal, reminding us of Lord Lovat, the Jacobite rebel, who, when luncheon time approached, betook himself to a fall on his estate famous for its leaping salmon, and placed a cauldron of boiling water in such a position that a fish missing its spring would tumble into the pot.

THE SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us the following table, which shows that the succession to the Crown has only seven times since the Conquest gone to the eldest son of the last Sovereign:

Succeeded	By	Succeeded	By
William of Normandy	By his third son.	Henry VII.	By his second son.
Henry I.	brother.	Henry VIII.	" third son.
William Rufus	" nephew.	Edward VI.	" sister.
Henry II.	" cousin.	Mary	By her half-sister.
Stephen	" third son.	Elizabeth	kingman.
Richard I.	" brother.	James I.	By his second son.
John	" eldest son.	Charles I.	" second son.
Henry III.	" third son.	Charles II.	" brother.
Edward I.	" third son.	James II.	daughter.
Edward II.	" eldest son.	Mary	By her husband.
Edward III.	" grandson.	William III.	By his sister-in-law.
Richard II.	" cousin.	Anne	By great-grandson of James I.
Henry IV.	" eldest son.	George I.	By his eldest son.
Henry V.	" distant	George II.	" grandson.
Henry VI.	" distant	George III.	" eldest son.
Edward IV.	" eldest son.	George IV.	" brother.
Edward V.	" uncle.	William IV.	" niece.
Richard III.	" cousin.		

WHERE MERMAIDS ARE REALLY SEEN.

IN the time of Alexander the Great, and afterwards under the Seleucids, the ancient Greeks became acquainted with the north-western part of India. Among other things, they heard that the seas about Ceylon were peopled with mermaids.

In this case, as in the case of so many other wonderful tales, there was a certain amount of truth underlying the fiction; for those seas are peopled by creatures (as big or bigger than human beings) which have a habit of raising themselves up vertically out of the water, when they present a very startling appearance to an unscientifically critical eye.

Astonished travellers behold beings with rounded, human-looking heads, showing their body down to the bust out of the water, and not infrequently holding a baby in their arms. After remaining some time in this attitude they would suddenly dive, and then a tail like a fish's became exposed to view.

Small wonder, then, that sailors should imagine they were beholding creatures half women and half fish, for the vividness of a sailor's imagination is proverbial. But the creature thus seen is as different in temper and habit from the fabled mermaids as it is in body.

Instead of seeking to seduce unwary voyagers to visit its home beneath the waves, in order there to devour them, the dugong (for that is the name for this sort of mermaid) browses peacefully on seaweed, and is as harmless as it is curious.



Have I bought what, Mr. Editor?

SEEKING THE MARRIAGE YEAR.

IN some parts of the south-west of England a curious superstition prevails.

A hair is taken from a maiden's head and passed through a wedding-ring. The ends are then held by the girl with her first finger and thumb, and the ring suspended a little way from the top of a half-filled tumbler of water.

The hand is held perfectly still, but the ring is presently seen to oscillate to such an extent that it chinks against the sides of the tumbler. The number of chinks is said to correspond with the number of years which will elapse before the girl is married.

THE MYSTERIES OF SWAN CULTURE.

THE abundance of swans on the Thames is due to the fact that they are carefully tended. They are not to be reckoned among *feræ naturæ*; indeed, though other species are chance visitors, the "mute swan" is never, strictly speaking, a wild bird in England; but they are private property, the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies being among the principal owners.

Keepers are appointed to look after them, especially in the breeding season, when they are in some danger from predaceous animals, and more from predaceous persons. Still, they can take pretty good care of themselves, for the cock bird is very fierce in defence of his nest or young, and can deal formidable blows with his pinions, although if he has succeeded in breaking a limb, as popular report asserts, the sufferer's bones must have been rather weak.

The nests are generally built on the "aits," where the osier beds afford a quiet retreat and a good foundation for the capacious structure. This is constructed roughly of twigs and reeds, and raised some little height above the ground. In former days, when *fait ce que tu voudras* was a motto adopted by City Companies more easily than in the present, they used, as sole conservators of the river Thames, to make an excursion annually in their barges, with all due ceremony and festivity, in order to count and mark their swans.

This process was called "swan upping," corrupted generally into "swan hopping." The swans were caught and examined, sometimes not without a good deal of trouble, for a strong old cock bird did not submit himself very willingly to the physical suasion of the "swan crook."

Cygnets were marked on the bill with the special symbol of the company to which the parent birds belonged. The Vintners' Company mark was two necks, whence, by a slight corruption, came the curious inn sign of the "Swan with Two Necks."

WHERE THERE IS AN ALBINO COLONY.

SINCE the appearance of albino girls in penny gaffs and country fairs, the general public have indulged in considerable curiosity and speculation as to where the various managers procure their pink-eyed specimens.

Although seldom met with, there is a colony of these people, named the Pittsleyes, living at Cape Cod, in North America. For generations the Pittsley family, known in the colony as the "White-haired Pittsleys," have been albino, and have intermarried. Although exceedingly clannish, they took into their family, years ago, a man named Reynolds, in whose race the peculiarity had cropped up, and so added the "White-haired Reynolds" to the little army of Cape Cod's human curiosities.

Until quite recently, a dozen or so of the Pittsley albinos might have been found within a very few miles of one another, and sometimes under the same roof. Lately, however, the families seem to have scattered and spread over the most lonely parts of the country in the neighbourhood of Cape Cod.

The museum albinos and the albinos in private life have very little in common, the latter being most disappointing. Their hair is not crimped and curled to the museum limit, but hangs in long, thin, and stiff tails. The eyes of the people in this region prove their albinism without a doubt; they are pink, like rabbits' eyes, extremely weak, and almost closed, so that it is with great difficulty that one is able to examine them.

When the eye is fully opened the lid is lifted only for a second, and a quick look has to be given in order to discover that the pupil is dark red, surrounded with a light red ring, while the ball of the eye is pale pink encircled by the darker shade of the eyelid. The effect would be quite pink if the eye were to remain at rest, but owing to the quivering and dilating of the pupil red lights seem to flash out.

In their mode of living and love of outdoor life these people resemble the gipsies. Another point that allies them to the wandering tribe is their wonderful tact in exchanging horses and cattle, a business in which all the males are experts. They are very illiterate, and account for their physical peculiarities by the theory that one of their ancestors had his hair turned white through fright, and bequeathed this curious legacy to posterity.

MONEY AND ORNAMENTS.

IN India, for the mass of the people, the purchase of ornaments is almost the one form of indulgence to which a man who has made a little money treats himself. Ordinarily, the man who has saved a few rupees does not change the nature of his food, or the style of his clothing, nor does he invest in articles of furniture.

What he does—if he is of a cautious and saving nature—is to put his rupees in a hiding-place, but if he is inclined for show, he indulges his fancy by putting gold or silver ornaments on the persons of his wife and children.

These ornaments are the very last things to be parted with on a reverse of fortune, and even in the lowest social depths they are not put on the market until the last piece of coined money has vanished, and no household utensils of brass or copper are left with which to obtain a coin.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S.A.

THERE is a general belief that the President is not allowed to go out of the United States, but it is not grounded on any facts. The President is commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, and it is conceivable that in a war with a foreign country he might be called upon to leave the country to take command.

If the Americans had any serious war during Grant's terms he might, perhaps, have taken the field in person. In sailing, some of the Presidents have gone upon the "high seas" out of the jurisdiction of the United States.

It is said, also, that Andrew Johnson, while he was living near the frontier, crossed into Canada for a few minutes, telling his secretary afterwards to say nothing about it; and that President Arthur, while on a hunting trip, chased a deer several miles across the border.

SACRIFICE THE FIRST.

HE had been working all the winter to get a place in the brass band as a cornet player, and just as his hopes seemed to be on the verge of fulfilment, she met him on his way home from the post-office, and, linking her hand within his arm, walked on in silence until they reached the poplar walk.

There she stopped in the long shadows and said: "George, I wish you wouldn't play the cornet in the new band."

"Why not?" said he, in surprise. "It is the place of honour, and I get a great deal of attention by it, dear."

"Yes, I know," she said coaxingly. "It is so nice to have you noticed by everyone, and all that, dear, but—"

She paused and hung her curly head a little lower.

"But what?" said he sharply.

"Blowing the cornet makes—makes—" Her voice sank to a pouting whisper. "Makes the lips so stiff and hard?"

George has decided not to be the cornet player in the band.

AUTOGRAPH HUNTING.

AUTOGRAPH hunters sometimes get prominent persons into very unpleasant positions. As an evidence of this fact we find a somewhat amusing anecdote of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.

It seems that when Mr. Chamberlain was made a Cabinet Minister he got hundreds of requests for his autograph.

For a time he answered each one in an autograph note, but the labour involved became so great that finally he had a printed form prepared, running: "Your request of such a date is hereby complied with." Then, when an autograph request came in, he simply signed this blank form, and let it go thus.

One day, a tall, raw-boned Warwickshire man walked into his office.

"Morning," said he.

"Good-morning," said Mr. Chamberlain, looking up.

"I came for that place you promised me," said the countryman, after an awkward pause.

"Place? I promised you no place," said Mr. Chamberlain.

"Yes, you did," insisted the countryman stoutly. "I've got your promise in your own handwriting." With that he hauled out one of the autograph replies: "Your request of such a date."

"But, man alive," said Mr. Chamberlain, "that was in response to a request from you for my autograph."

"No, 'twasn't," said the man. "I never asked for no autograph. I want a place; that's what I wrote for."

Mr. Chamberlain had the man's letter hunted up, and, sure enough, he found that it was a formal request for a place.

"Here," said the perplexed Minister, emptying into his big hand all the money he had in his pocket. "I can't give you a place; I haven't any to give."

And with that the man had to be content.

HOW SHE LOOKED.

THERE are those who wear the mantle of prosperity with grace and ease after a life of privation and hard work, and there are others to whose shoulders it is not quickly adjusted.

A North-country man who had been unsuccessful in one venture after another at last made money in a mine, and shortly after his wife and daughter were seen riding in a handsome carriage behind a coachman.

A person past whom the pair were driven noticed the look of painful self-consciousness that overspread the features of the miner's wife as she sat bolt upright, looking straight before her.

"Now, ma," came in clear tones from the daughter, whose keen face was alive with enjoyment too strong to be concealed: "Now, ma, can't you loll back, and not look as if the water was bilin' over?"

A GUIDE TO BURGLARY.

THERE has come into the hands of the Paris police a book bearing the title, "Manual of the Perfect Thief in the Environs of Paris." This interesting work was written by the chief of a gang of burglars, and is intensely practical. It treats of the most successful and approved ways of "cracking" country houses.

The introduction contains this statement: "The environs of Paris are divided into four sections, each of which is controlled by a band of burglars, having its own centre of operations, and never passing beyond the boundaries allotted to it, as in that case it would seriously interfere with the work of the band operating in the neighbouring section."

Several chapters describe the best methods of disposing of stolen goods, and how to prepare them so as to prevent their identification.

The author, when caught, gave the police much useful information, which resulted in the imprisonment of many of his comrades, and he escaped with a light sentence, though on his release it is likely that, unless he emigrates, his career will be cut short by a knife or revolver. He is a man of excellent family, received a fine education, and once served in the French army.

CLEVER ROGUES WHO SWINDLE BANKS.

ONE of the most remarkable bank swindles ever carried out was the great Vagliano case in the States some six or seven years ago. The fraud was managed with considerable ability by a clerk, who used his position as principal foreign correspondent in the office of a merchant and foreign banker to forge letters of advice and bills, which he pretended had come from abroad.

His plan was to place the forged bills before his employer together with genuine bills, and so obtain "acceptance" in proper form. The ingenuity of the swindle consisted in this, that though the signatures were fraudulently obtained, they were genuine enough in themselves, and were duly honoured by the bank. When the fraud, which involved a sum of £71,500, was eventually discovered, the accused pleaded guilty; and, after a trial lasting six days, was sentenced to penal servitude for ten years.

In another celebrated case, which created a great amount of excitement at the time, the chief cashier of a London bank so grossly abused his position as to carry on for some months a series of frauds by which he obtained from the Bank of England and appropriated to his own use many thousands of pounds. The bank in which he was employed, like all London banks, kept an account with the Bank of England, and his procedure was to sign vouchers for large sums, which were accordingly placed to the debit of his bank in the Bank of England pass-book, in which he himself wrote up the figures as they ought to have appeared, being thus able to deceive the directors from day to day.

The real pass-book was taken to and from the Bank of England by the "walk-clerk" in the usual manner, but when brought to the cashier each afternoon he quietly concealed it and substituted his own sham book for the purpose of tiding over the daily investigation in the manager's room. The unavoidable day of reckoning came when the auditors wrote straight to the Bank of England for a signed certificate of the amount of the cash balance, and so at once found out the discrepancy. The cashier had fled, but was brought to trial and transported.

A curious case occurred not long ago in Paris, showing that, after all, the recent wonderful inventions of science are not unmixed blessings. An accomplished swindler managed to obtain a considerable sum of money, not by the risky process of putting pen to paper, but by going to the telephone exchange and ringing up a merchant, with whose affairs he had spent some time and trouble in making himself acquainted, and then counterfeiting the voice of a bank manager, who was made to urge excellent reasons why the merchant should at once attach his signature to a particular bill which would come into his hands that very day. Time being precious, no personal interview or correspondence interfered to spoil the well-laid plan of this rascal, who escaped with his haul and was never captured.

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'TWIXT EDITOR AND READER.

PENKNIVES are this week offered for the fifty cleverest humorous definitions, in as few words as possible, of a bicycle. Attempts, in envelopes or on post-cards, marked "Bicycle," to reach me by Tuesday, January 7th.

I beg to remind readers of the offer of prizes to the children announced last week. One sum of £5, one of £2, and three of £1, will be given for the most interesting original sketches drawn by children under the age of fourteen. Full conditions of the competition appear in the issue of P.W., dated December 28th, 1895—our double Christmas-week number.

F. R. asks whether there is any country where it is supposed to be undignified to ride?—I don't know whether it is supposed to be, but it is. It is not necessary to go farther than Hyde Park to find this out for yourself. In Japan the wealthy classes regard it as bad form to ride a horse faster than a walk. Presumably they consider it undignified. What a pity that the class of people in this country, who judge that a horse's best point is short legs which prevent the saddle from being too far from the ground, cannot be persuaded to think so too.

T. W. is anxious to adopt a child from the workhouse, and would be glad to know what steps ought to be taken.—Presumably there is a poorhouse in the neighbourhood in which T. W. lives. In that case the best plan would be to write to the Master, or to call personally and lay the matter before the Board of Guardians. An advertisement in the papers would no doubt bring in a large number of responses. I would suggest, however, that T. W. should state explicitly what sort of child he wants. There are several kinds; in fact, too many. I do not know whether T. W. is anxious to reform anyone. In that case, although we could ill afford the loss, we might spare him one of our office boys. I regard these boys as the most perfect field for any person who wishes to become a reformer.

H. T. R. asks: "In a tug-of-war two men of equal strength are pulling upon each end of a rope. Is the strain upon the rope equal to the pulling power of the men at one end or both ends of the rope?"—It is one of the laws of mechanics that antagonistic forces balance each other in proportion to their value. In other words they are not cumulative, and cannot produce a greater strain in the connecting medium than is due to the greater of the forces.

MR. CHARLES MITCHELL, of the Brighton and Preston Park School Board, writes:

The interesting picture, "An Eviction," from your Christmas Number formed the subject of a school lesson this week. I have never known the lads take to a lesson with such avidity. Their compositions were necessarily much alike, but from among them I select the best, thinking it may not be devoid of interest to you to note any of the various ways in which your publications enter into the public life.

The short essay written on the subject of this coloured plate by Arthur Timms, aged 10 years and 11 months, is by no means altogether without merit. From the fact that the chicken is being evicted by a pair of bellows, he deduces the corollary that chickens do not like draughts, a detail that ought to be borne in mind when constructing chicken roosts. The girl's method of effecting the eviction is also criticised with the ingenious comment that a lady will often drive chickens into their run where a man would drive them away.

A. W. T. asks: "How many sparrows are there in London?"—Authorities on the subject differ. It has been estimated that there are two sparrows to every hundred grains of oats and chaff dropped from the noses of the London cab horses. This, of course, is merely approximate. Probably it is about 3,000 above the actual figures; but it is just possible that the first estimate includes coster's barrows, which would account for the difference.

F. T. T. asks: "Who was Mrs. Grundy, anyway?"—This query ought to have been addressed to the editor of *TRUTH*. It is his special delight to trace the antecedents of all frauds. Besides, nobody seems to know exactly who she was. I am not surprised that the shades of departed authors are not anxious to claim any responsibility for such a hypocritical old scoundrel. No self-respecting spirit would. According to some people she never existed at all—not even as a character in a book. They say that the real creator of Mrs. Grundy was Thomas Morton, the dramatist, who was also the father of the gifted author of *Boas and Cox*; and that she was merely a mysterious personage whose name was brought up at every conceivable opportunity. In the first scene of Tom Morton's *Speed the Plough*, Mrs. Ashfield shows herself very jealous of neighbour Grundy, and farmer Ashfield says to her: "Be quiet, wool ye? Always ding, dinging Dame Grundy into my ears. What will Mrs. Grundy say? What will Mrs. Grundy think?"

MR. F. C. COLLINS writes to claim that he was the first to invent and patent an automatic musical recorder—an accomplishment which was credited in a recent issue to two Frenchmen. He suggests that his original idea was filched by these foreigners, but this is a matter into which I cannot be expected to enter. So far as I know, no one has ever yet had an idea that someone else was not ready to claim as his own.

I HAVE received a very flattering letter from a correspondent in Constantinople who has forwarded an attempt to solve the puzzle in the Christmas Number of P.W. Among other things she makes a special point of congratulating me on the excellence and accuracy of the articles that we published some little time ago on the Turkish Metropolis. This, coming from a life-long resident, is naturally not altogether unpleasing. I am glad, too, to refer to this letter because it is a very good answer to those habitual grumblers who declare that the time allowed for our competitions is not sufficient to give every one a fair chance. As I said only the other week, this is the utmost nonsense. It is not always possible to give readers who are abroad a chance to compete, but there is always ample opportunity for those residing in any part of the British Isles.

HERMANN.—A formal call should not outlast fifteen minutes. Ten minutes is a very nice time.

T. P. P. asks this question: "Why is Californian fruit better when canned than when eaten fresh?"

—This is a conundrum which has puzzled a good many people. The fresh fruit is tasteless and insipid. The canned fruit is superior perhaps to any obtained from other parts of the globe. The most reasonable explanation seems to be that while the fruit which is tinned is not gathered until it is ripe, with all its juicy richness and delicate flavour, the fruit for shipment at a distance is gathered unripe, and left to reach perfection on the journey. There is an indescribable difference between a Californian peach in California and one eaten thousands of miles East. At the best of times, however, the Californian fruit is watery compared with English fruit.

STOKER.—The coin is worth, I believe, about half-a-crown. This, however, is a buying and not necessarily a selling price.

"**FOUR** Englishmen in Africa" have put their heads together to write me an exceedingly friendly letter, from which the following extract is perhaps of general interest:

One Sunday last month (October) we went for a sail in Table Bay, and as the wind fell light we were not over pleased to find that we had left our fishing tackle behind. As it happened, however, one of us had a line and hook, and as we were seldom without our P.W., the idea of using the wrapper in the place of bait occurred to us, and the attempt was made with such success that we captured three smelt, five silverfish, two Hottentot fish, and one sea-cat, or octopus, as you call it in the old country. This creature measured eighteen inches across the body.

XURIOUS asks: "In which country is the telegraph mostly used?"—In proportion to the population, the greatest number of telegraphic dispatches are sent in Australia. For every hundred inhabitants nearly twice as many messages are sent in Australia as in this country. After Great Britain comes Switzerland, after Switzerland, Holland, and fifth, the United States. The latter, however, can not only boast the greatest length of telegraphic wire, but a far greater number of dispatches are sent over them in the course of the year than is the case in Australia or anywhere else in the world.

MAN FRIDAY recently purchased an expensive gold watch which is guaranteed to keep time to a second. Instead of this it varies a minute in a week, and nothing the maker can do can set this right.

I should advise "Man Friday" to wind his watch in the morning instead of over night. This little precaution is probably all that is required. During the night one's watch is at rest, as it were. That is to say, it lies quietly on the table or under one's pillow. If one does not wind it at night the mainspring is then relaxed instead of being in that state during the day, when it ought really to be freshly wound in order to keep the movement steady while the watch is being constantly handled and jerked around by the wearer. A relaxed mainspring during the busiest part of the day is quite sufficient to account for a variation of one minute in the course of a week.

"**WHAT**," asks a correspondent, "is the most peculiar case of partial mental derangement that has been authenticated?"—The delightful instance quoted by a well-known doctor of a man who, although otherwise perfectly sane, thought he was a fire-escape, and always turned out at the sound of an alarm, will never be eclipsed. The most delicious part of the hallucination is that the eccentric was perfectly alive to the impossibility of a man being a fire-escape. He was, in fact, everlastingly puzzled to discover how it was that the combination came to exist in his own person. Apart from this one flaw, he was in undoubted possession of his entire mental faculties. A scientific contemporary quotes a case of a defective memory that also deserves special mention, although I confess I should like to know the man's name and address before becoming sponsor for its accuracy.

It appears that he was a business man, well-educated, and, to sum up in one word, essentially level-headed. One day he suddenly showed himself unable to recognise the letters D, G, Q, X, and Y, and the numbers 6, 7, and 8. Without any apparent reason, for no cause that could even be guessed at, these eight symbols suddenly became so much Greek to him. Any words that contain the foregoing five letters he cannot read; any problem involving the use of 6, 7, and 8 he cannot solve. To add to the inconvenience, he can no longer tell the time by his watch. In the meantime he has perforce resigned his position in the City, and, although otherwise a man of perfectly balanced mind, he awaits the return of his memory before he can really enjoy life again.

J. R. K.—The replies to "Questions Worth Answering" that have appeared in this paper have never been reproduced in book form. Probably they never will be.

T. D. T. asks: "Which country in the world has the most punctual train service?"—Japan. There are very few railways in Japan, and very few trains run each day, but it must be a very untoward circumstance that prevents them from keeping exactly to the scheduled time. It is rather a characteristic of the Japanese that they pride themselves on their exactness. As for the trains, they are only toy trains after all, like everything else in the country except, apparently, the warships and the soldiers. The little officials scampering about the platform are just like so many children. Yet the trains come and go with the regularity and precision of clockwork. It would not be unnatural, perhaps, to suppose that lines over which only a few trains run are always the most punctual, and that no particular credit belongs to the Japs. That this is not so those who have travelled in Spain, and Russia, and Southern America, know to their cost. On the contrary, as a general rule, the busier a line is, the more punctual are the trains.

Apropos of a recent article on vegetarianism, Dr. Oldfield, M.A., who does not share the views of the writer, says:

During the last six months I have had the opportunity of conducting some very careful experiments in relation to vegetarianism, and the results differ so totally from your figures that I am sure you will like to draw your readers' attention to them.

I have had twelve men and twelve women under observation. Their pulse has been taken regularly twice a day. The ages vary from nine years to sixty-five years. They are cases who have lived on ordinary diet all their lives, and who were at once put upon a strictly non-flesh and non-alcoholic dietary. In five of the men the speed of pulse had increased at the end of a fortnight. In two it remained constant, and in five it had slightly decreased. In two out of these five—the only two who remained longer under observation—the pulse increased again to above its original speed. Thus in eight out of twelve there was actually increased rapidity, and in two out of twelve no change.

Out of twelve women, in nine cases there was increase, in one case it remained constant, and in two only was there any decrease.

COCKNEY SPORTSMAN.—One talks of a covey of partridges, a nye or nest of pheasants, a heard of swans, an exalting of larks, a watching of nightingales, a team of ducks, a muster of peacocks, a bevy of quails, a flight of doves, a flock or gaggle of geese, a spring of teals, a fall of woodcocks, a pack of grouse, a sedge of herons, a shoal of rooks, a trip of widgeon, a wisp or walk of snipe. I could, in fact, go on *ad lib.*, but as you probably would not know even the names of half the birds, it is, perhaps, somewhat waste of time.

D. E. T. asks: "What is the pottery tree?"—Botanically speaking it is the *Mouileia utilis*, one of the most extraordinary vegetable products of Brazil. The tree, except in very exceptional cases, seldom measures more than a foot in diameter at the base, although it grows to a height of 100 feet and more. The bark contains a large amount of silica, which is employed to a great extent in the manufacture of pottery. The bark is first burned and then pulverised, and afterwards mixed with clay. From these ingredients a strong serviceable earthenware is obtained, the natives employing it for all kinds of culinary purposes.

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